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ベイビーステップ

RAWs: Imangascans
Translator: Ruggia
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今回の表紙は
アクリル絵の具を使ってみました。
岡田に妙に力が入ってしまった。
次はカラーインクかな？

勝木 光

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 27

勝木 光

KC MAGAZINE

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 27

勝木 光

講談社

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

勝利だけは、絶対渡さない!!

勝木光
JOKER
6
A
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
22

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

エーちゃん
丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「今回の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。ナツとの交際がテニスに好影響!?

ナツ
鷹崎奈津

STC所属。全国トップレベルの選手でプロ志望。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。ただいま恋もテニスも絶好調!!

佐々木竜子

エーちゃんの真剣に必ず駆けつけてくれる心強い応援団。姫子はエーちゃんへの想い実らず、恋敵。影山は親友。

影山小次郎

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート。

清水亜希

コーチである母親と二人三脚でプロを目指す。ジュニア日本一の選手で、エーちゃんに淡い恋心?

関東ジュニアの覇者!!
その勢いのまま全日本へ!

ラブラブ全開♪

全日本ジュニア
各都道府県から勝ち上がった強豪64名が出場。優勝者には、日本のプロが総結集する全日本選手権の出場権が与えられる。
全日本ジュニアランク2位。
高校総体 個人戦、準優勝者。
第2シード
神田久志
全日本ジュニアランク1位。
関東ジュニアでは荒谷に破れ準優勝。高校総体 個人戦ベスト4。
第1シード
難波江 優
関東ジュニアでは最強王者・難波江を倒し優勝。高校総体 個人戦ベスト4。
第5シード
荒谷 竜
2回戦
岡田×神田
第3シード
エーちゃん
第4シード
激突!!
ジャンピング岡田バズーカ
炸裂!!
名付け
岡田の強引な攻撃に対しエーちゃんは……!?
勝利だけは絶対渡さない!!

Baby Steps

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#206 ONE WHO HAS WHAT IT TAKES
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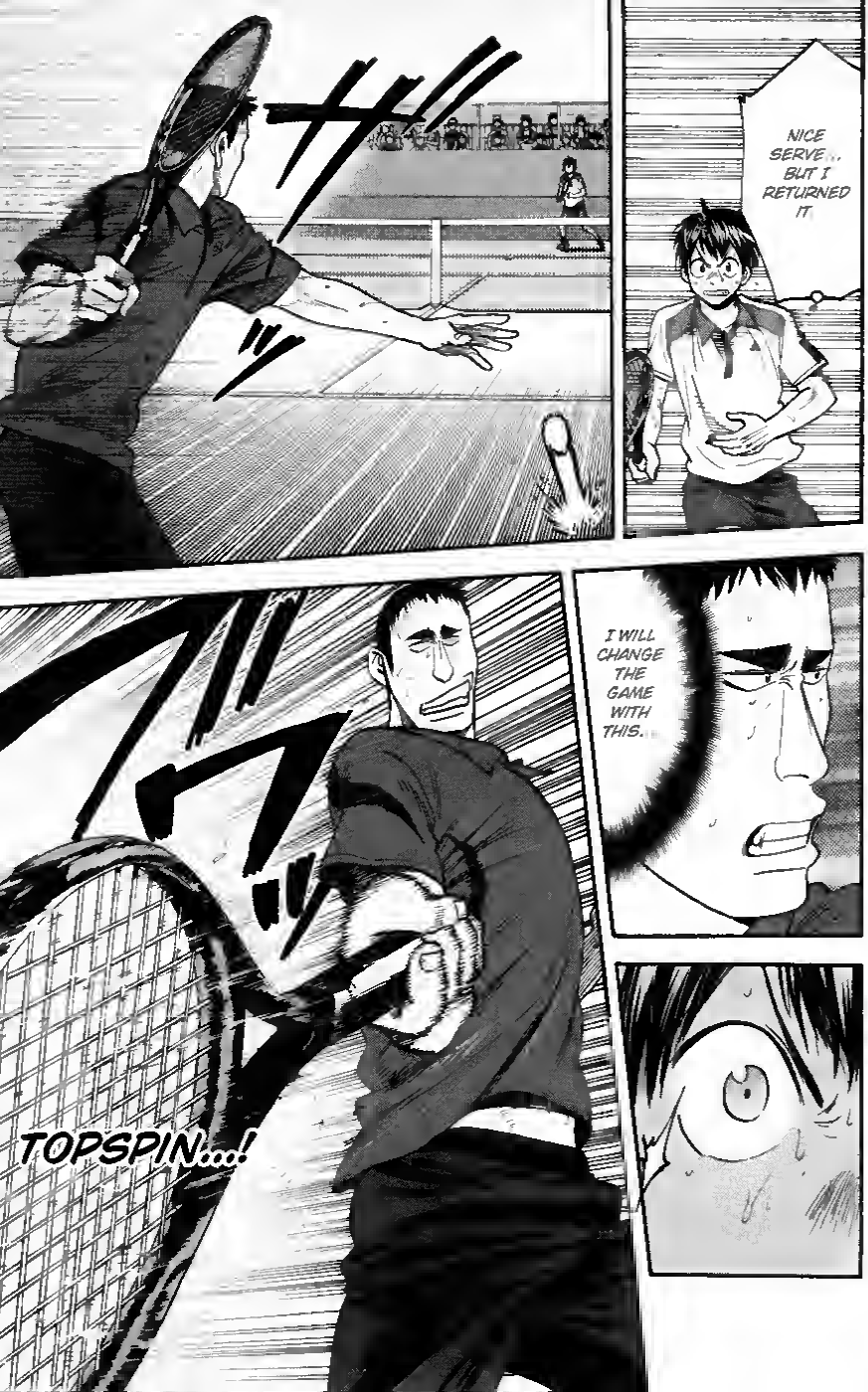
#209 ATTENTION
#210 CLASH
#211 MIRACLE TO BE THE PRO

to Giant Strides

30 - 40...
WE'RE AT THE START OF THE FINAL SET, YET IT'S MY BREAK CHANCE ALREADY...
全日本ジュニアテニス大会
PLAYER I II III
OKADA TAKAYUKI 6 10
MARUO EIICHIROU 3 6 0
DUNLOP
#202 MY TENNIS
BUT I'LL STILL MAKE ROOM TO COMPENSATE FOR WHEN HE STARTS DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
IF HE IS GOING TO USE THE RISING FLAT SHOT, THEN I HAVE A WINNING SCENARIO...
I WANT TO FOCUS ON THE VICTORY IN FRONT OF ME AT LEAST FOR THIS MATCH... NO, FOR THIS SET.
IF I'M GOING TO LOSE HERE AND REGRET NOT BEING ABLE TO BECOME A PRO...
I'LL USE A TOP-SPIN!

IN ORDER TO BECOME "A MAN WHO HAS WHAT IT TAKES"... I WILL WIN!
RGH!


NICE SERVE... BUT I RETURNED IT.
I WILL CHANGE THE GAME WITH THIS.
TOPSPIN...!

スカッ
!?
HUH?
HUH?
STC

G-GAME, MARUO. 1 - 0. FINAL SET.
MARUO'S BREAK! HE'S FINALLY IN THE LEAD!
NO, BEFORE THAT... WHAT WAS THAT? SWING AND A MISS?
THERE WAS NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THAT BALL...
IT'S MY FIRST TIME SEEING A SEEDED PLAYER TOTALLY MISS HITTING A REGULAR BALL...
WHAAAAT?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING, OKADA!?
HE FINALLY STARTED TRYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

BUT THAT SWING JUST NOW... HE WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO USE A TOPSPIN AND FAILED.
IT'S BIG THAT I MANAGED TO BREAK...
BUT HE MISSED.. WHY? IS IT BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN HITTING ONLY RISING FLAT SHOTS FOR TOO LONG?
THAT MEANS .. HE WAS PLANNING ON CHANGING HIS SIMPLE TEMPO JUST AS I EXPECTED
ゴクッ
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG WITH OKADA?
HE'S NOT MOVING...
!!

ズッ
ズッ
YONEX
SFX MUMBLE MUMBLE MUMBLE

I TURNED CHANGING THE STYLE I HAD BEEN FIXATED ON SINCE NOW, BUT NOT ONLY DID MY BODY NOT MOVE THE WAY I WANTED, IT WAS A COMPLETE SWING-AND-MISS... MY PAINFUL DECISION TO COMPROMISE ENDED UP IN A COMPLETE FAILURE... AND IT WAS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BREAK POINT ON AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT MATCH THAT I NEED TO WIN NO MATTER WHAT... I NEVER MADE SUCH A MASSIVE FLOP IN THE PAST TEN YEARS...
I SEE .. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ABOUT MYSELF
DON'T BE DEFENSIVE ATTACK ..!
THE IMPORTANT THING IS HOW I'M GOING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS LEAD...
HE SEEMS TO BE THINKING A WHOLE BUNCH OF STUFF... BUT I CAN'T BE DISTRACTED

WHAT?!
HE'S ON THE MOVE ALREADY?!

0 - 15.
W-WHAT WAS THAT?!
HE READ THE BALL AND FINISHED WITH AN ACE!!
YEAAHHH! AWESO-MEEEE!!
JUMPING OKADA BAZOOKA RETURN ACE!
JUMPING OKADA BAZOOKA RETURN... WHAT?
DID HE FINALLY WAKE UP AFTER GETTING OWNED TOO HARD?
HE TOTALLY WENT ALL-IN FOR A WIDE!

I FEEL CLEAR NOW...
BULLSEYE... AND MY BODY FELT INCREDIBLY LIGHT...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I HAVE BEEN QUESTIONING MY STYLE FOR A LONG TIME...
HE'S PLAYING REALLY AGRESSIVE!!
NOW ALL I NEED TO DO IS RAISE THE STAKES TO A LEVEL WHERE I CAN GET THE POINT

ホッ
15 - 15.
BUT ERRORS ARE MEANT TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU PLAY THAT AGGRESSIVE
THAT WAS CLOSE...
ドキ
ドキ
パコーン

NO WAY IS HE GOING TO KEEP PLAYING LIKE THIS?
ERRORS THAT CAN HELP MY NEXT PLAY ARE FINE.
LEARNING I WAS ONLY 10 CENTIMETERS AWAY FROM GOING IN MAKES THAT WORTH IT.
HMMM.
HE HAD A CHANGE IN HIS MENTAL STATE IT'S GOING TO BE TOUGH IF THAT CONTINUES,
SINCE HE ENDS THE POINT EVEN BEFORE MARUO CAN HIT THE SHORT CROSS.
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A PLAYER WHO WAS IN A HEAVY SLUMP SUDDENLY UNDERGOES AN INCREDIBLE EVOLUTION FROM A SUDDEN INSPIRATION.
IT'S FRIGHTENING THAT OKADA'S PLAYING STYLE REMINDS ME OF EXACTLY THAT.
fly

15 - 30.
HEY, IS IT JUST ME OR DID OKADA SUDDENLY BECOME INCREDIBLE?
BUT... ISN'T HE RISKING IT TOO MUCH?
OUT. 30 - 30.
BUT STILL, LOOK...
MOST OF THE POINTS OF THIS GAME
ARE DETER-MINED BY WHETHER OR NOT OKADA MISSES.
30 - 40.
CRAP.. THIS IS NO JOKE
THESE RECKLESS SHOTS ARE GOING IN LEFT AND RIGHT.. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF HIM HOLDING BACK UNTIL NOW?
HIS MOVES HAVE GOTTEN A LOT BETTER TOO.

EVEN IF HIS PLAYS ARE REPETITIVE, I CAN'T DO ANYTHING AGAINST THESE...!

GAME, OKADA. 1 - 1. FINAL SET.
WOW!!! OKADA GOT HIS REVENGE ALREADY!
THINGS HAVE GOTTEN INTER-ESTING!
NEITHER SIDE IS BACKING DOWN ON THE FINAL SET!!
GOOD, GOOD... HAVEN'T FELT THIS GOOD IN A WHILE...
AM I PRETTY CLOSE TO MY PERFECT STATE?
.....

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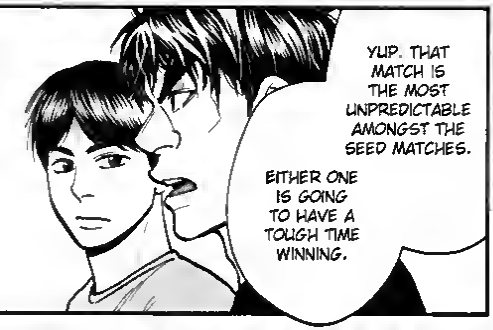
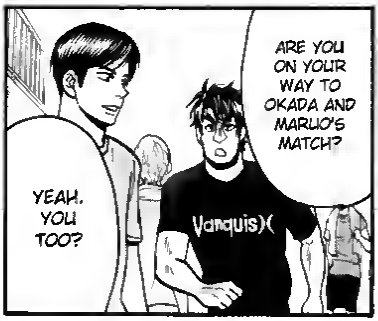
HEY, NABAE!


YUP. THAT MATCH IS THE MOST UNPREDICTABLE AMONGST THE SEED MATCHES.
EITHER ONE IS GOING TO HAVE A TOUGH TIME WINNING.


ARE YOU ON YOUR WAY TO OKADA AND MARUO'S MATCH?
YEAH. YOU TOO?

adidas

YOU'RE RIGHT... AND BECAUSE OF THAT, IF MARUO-KUN WINS,
HIS NAME WILL INSTANTLY SPREAD ALL OVER THE TOURNAMENT. .

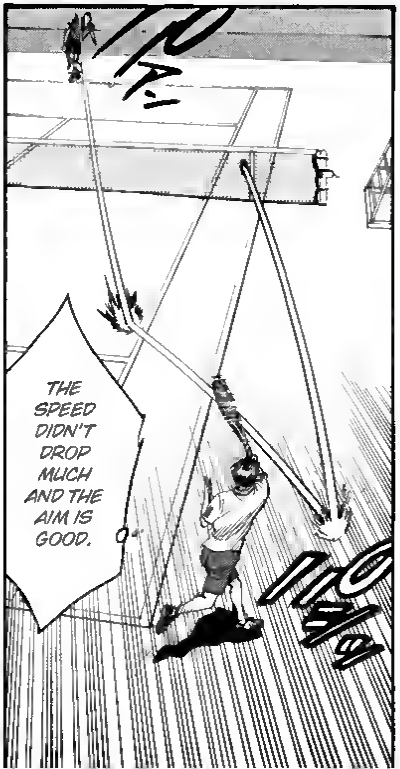
#203 VISION

RGH!

THAT WAS CLOSE... BUT THAT WAS PRACTICALLY THE FASTEST SERVE HE HIT SO FAR.
AND IT WAS AIMING FOR A PRETTY TIGHT SPOT...

FAULT!

NO WAY, ALREADY...?


THE SPEED DIDN'T DROP MUCH AND THE AIM IS GOOD.

JUMP SHOT!!!

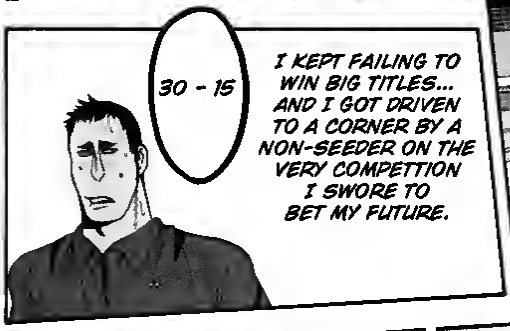
15 - 0.
I CAN'T DO MUCH ABOUT CORD BALLS...
AH...
EVEN THOUGH THE RISK IS SUPPOSED TO BE PRETTY HIGH, HIS ACCURACY HAS BEEN RISING...
HE'S BEEN GOING FOR JUMP SHOTS WHENEVER HE CAN.
EVER SINCE THAT MISSED STROKE.
SUCH A SUPER-OFFENSIVE TENNIS...
IT'S TOTALLY UNTHINK-ABLE BASED ON THE DATA I HAD ON OKADA-KUN SO FAR.

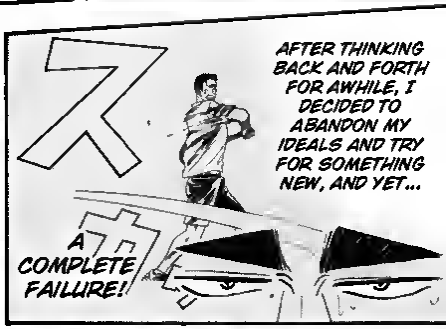
110
ギロッ
0-OUT.
15 - 15.
THAT WAS SLIGHTLY IN.

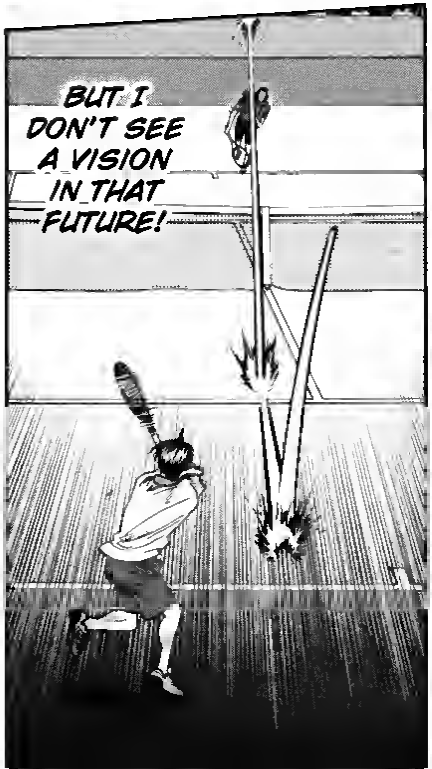
ALL HIS SHOTS HAVE BEEN SUPER CLOSE FOR A WHILE NOW...
YOU CAN'T TELL WHICH SIDE THE POINT WILL GO TO.
THERE'S NO WAY HE'S BEEN AIMING FOR ALL OF THAT.
THERE'S NO WAY SUCH TENNIS WILL KEEP WORK-ING—.
I HAVE BEEN...
RUNNING AWAY FROM THE IDEAL TENNIS I HAD BEEN BETTING ON...

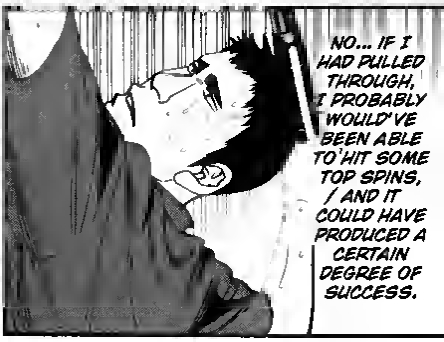
パシッ

ヒュ
アン


30 - 15
I KEPT FAILING TO WIN BIG TITLES... AND I GOT DRIVEN TO A CORNER BY A NON-SEEDER ON THE VERY COMPETTION I SWORE TO BET MY FUTURE.


AFTER THINKING BACK AND FORTH FOR AWHILE, I DECIDED TO ABANDON MY IDEALS AND TRY FOR SOMETHING NEW, AND YET...
A COMPLETE FAILURE!


BUT I DON'T SEE A VISION IN THAT FUTURE!


NO... IF I HAD PULLED THROUGH, I PROBABLY WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO HIT SOME TOP SPINS, / AND IT COULD HAVE PRODUCED A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SUCCESS.

IF THERE'S NO VISION, THEN IT'S NOT A REAL CHALLENGE.
THAT'S JUST A "FAKE-CHALLENGE". I WAS JUST RUNNING AWAY FROM THE SITUATION.
40 - 15.
THE REASON I FAILED...
IS PROBABLY BECAUSE MY BODY SCREAMED "DON'T RUN AWAY"...
WHEN MY HEART WAS TRYING TO ABANDON MY VISION.

A VISIONLESS CHALLENGE IS DESERTION.
NOW THAT I REALIZED IT, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STICK WITH MY VISION.
IN OTHER WORDS, I'LL KEEP RAISING THE STAKES UNTIL I'M AT A LEVEL WHERE I CAN BEAT YOU.

I'LL USE HIGH-RISK-TO EARN THE HIGH-RETURN AND BECOME A MAN WHO HAS WHAT IT TAKES.
THAT IS MY IDEAL!!

GAME, OKADA. 2 - 1. FINAL SET.

WOOOWW!! OKADA'S LEGIT AWE-SOME!!!
HE'S JUST POWERING THROUGH EVERY-THING!
HECK
YAAAAAA!
HE'S SUPER COOOOL!!!
WAS IT JUMPING OKADA BAZOOKA? AWESOME!
KEEP ON GOING! GO! GO!!!

GOOD PERFORMANCE LETS YOU MAKE GOOD PLAYS, WHICH HELPS YOU CONCENTRATE ON YOURSELF EVEN BETTER ON YOUR NEXT PLAY...
NOW THAT HIS THOUGHTS HAVE GOTTEN SIMPLER DUE TO THE LACK OF HESITATION, HE CAN FOCUS ON THE GAME BETTER, LEADING TO A BETTER PERFORMANCE.
ゴク
ゴク
A SYNERGIC EFFECT WHERE GOOD CONCENTRATION IS LEADING TO EVEN BETTER FOCUS... OKADA IS VERY CLOSE TO THE ZONE RIGHT NOW...
THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THE NEXT ONE... IT'S GOING TO BE BAD IF HE BREAKS THIS.
CALM DOWN...
ALTHOUGH I GOT HAMMERED PRETTY BADLY, ALL HE DID W/ IS KEEP ONE GAME.
ふぅ
IT'S HARD TO THINK THAT OKADA-KUN'S CURRENT STATE WILL KEEP CONTINUING...
カチ
カチ
BUT AT THIS RATE, IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT IT WILL GO ON TILL THE NEXT GAME... OR THIS ENTIRE SET.

SO FAR HE'S BEEN AGGRESSIVELY STEALING THE FLOW OF THE GAME WITH HIS JUMP SHOTS...
WHAT SHOULD I DO IN ORDER TO SURVIVE...? NO, LAUNCH A COUNTER-ATTACK AND TAKE THE LEAD...
NO... I SHOULD EXPECT IT TO CONTINUE...
"BUT HIS PERFORMANCE NEVER DROPPED" WILL BE A SORRY EXCUSE
I NEED TO CONSIDER THE WORST CASE
OKAY!
TIME.
IF OKADA-KUN IS GOING TO BE PLAYING WITH SUCH HIGH RISK, THEN I NEED TO MATCH HIS STAKES TO A CERTAIN LEVEL TOO.

ARGH... EVEN WITH MY BEST SERVE, I CAN'T DO ANYTHING IF HE GUESSES THE SHOT CORRECTLY.
0 - 15.
BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE...

SINCE HE'S BETTING ON ONE DIRECTION, THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN HE GUESSES WRONG...
15 - 15.
BUT I WON'T HAND OVER THE VICTORY!
IN THAT CASE, I SHOULD STAY CALM AND HIT MY FIRST SERVE BASED ON DATA JUST LIKE I HAVE BEEN DOING TILL NOW.
ACTUALLY, SINCE I'M THE ONE WHO IS SERVING, THE ODDS SHOULD BE IN MY FAVOR ..
OKADA-KUN IS BETTING ON THE HIGH-RETURN...

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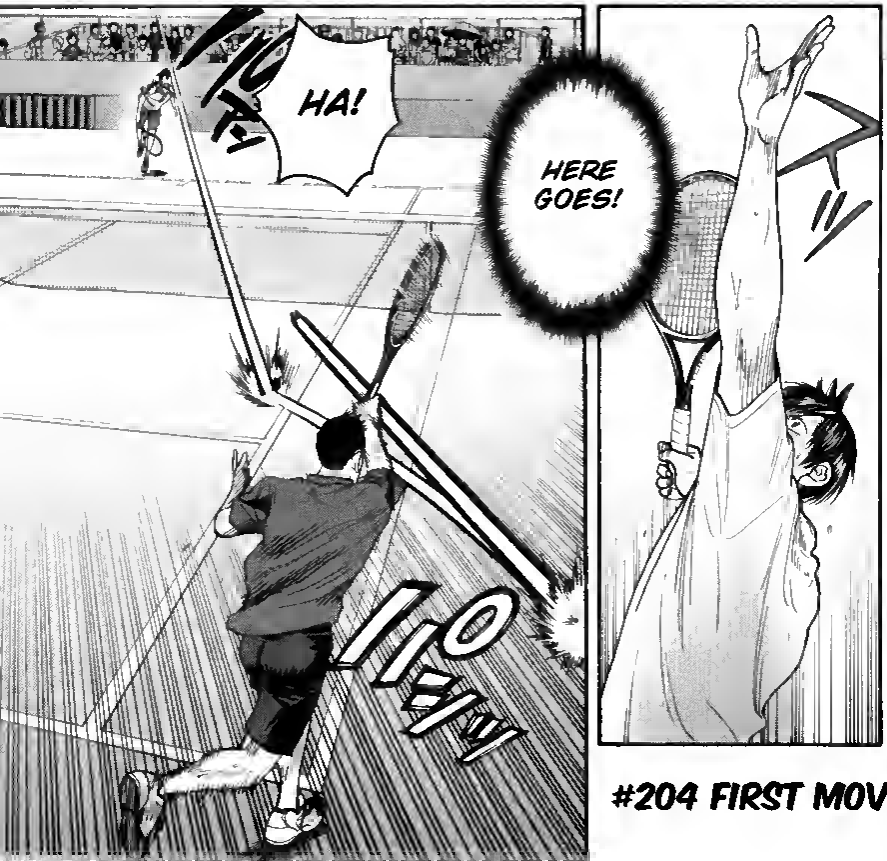
HOW SHOULD I COUNTER THIS OKADA-KUN WHO KEEPS MAKING HIGH-RISK SHOTS AT HIGH ACCURACY...
HOW SHOULD I MAKE MY FIRST MOVE AGAINST THESE AGGRESSIVE, FAST-PACED ATTACKS...?



#204 FIRST MOVE

WHILE I STILL HAVE THE AD-VANTAGE FROM MY SERVE...
BEFORE HE ATTACKS WITH A JUMP SHOT...
GO!
TO THE FURTHEST SPOT FROM OKADA-KUN, WITH A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON CONTROL.

JUMP!
Hard step.
Can't jump.
SINCE YOU NEED TO MAKE A HARD STEP RIGHT BEFORE YOU JUMP, YOU CAN'T HIT IT WHILE ON THE RUN...
I KNEW IT HE CAN'T JUMP SHOT
AND MIX IN SOME SLICES FROM TIME TO TIME SINCE THEY ARE HARD TO RETURN WITH A JUMP
DO WHATEVER I CAN IN ADVANCE TO PREVENT THE JUMP SHOT FROM HAPPENING...

SO IT TAKES A FAIR AMOUNT OF CONTROL TO MAKE HIM HIT ON THE RUN...
OKADA-KUN'S COURT COVERING SKILL IS TOP-CLASS, TOO...
THEN I'LL GAMBLE...
BUT IF OKADA-KUN IS GOING TO GAMBLE WITH HIS JUMP SHOTS...

WITH MY CONTROL!!

30 - 15.
110
YES !!
I DIDN'T LET HIM USE THE JUMP SHOT AND GOT THE POINT!
IT'S QUITE STRESS-FUL, BUT... THIS IS HOW I'LL FIGHT MY SERVICE GAMES!!!
HOW DO YOU EVEN AIM FOR THOSE PLACES?
WOW, HE'S GOT SOME AWESOME CONTROL.

DON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP AND GO WITH HIGH-PRECISION
ONCE I SEAL HIS JUMP SHOTS, HIS RHYTHM GETS QUITE SIMPLE...
CONTROL!!!

PLEASE BE IN.
RGH!
Y- YES!
40 - 15.

OUT!
GAME, MARUO. 2 - 2. FINAL SET.

YEAH !!
GOOD, GOOD... HE'S CONCENTRATED ON THE GAME.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THOSE JUMP SHOTS COMING RIGHT AND LEFT...
BUT... I WON'T LET HIM DO WHATEVER HE WANTS WHEN IT'S MY SERVE!

SO YOU AREN'T JUST GOING TO SIT AND WAIT FOR A MISS?
I'M FINALLY STARTING TO GET WHY...
IDE,
ARAYA,
AND NABAE THINK SO HIGHLY OF YOU...
オ
オ
THIS BAS-TARD...
EVEN THOUGH YOU SEEM LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE "IT" AT FIRST, YOU DEFINITELY DO HAVE "IT"
GUTS, UNIQUENESS, ABILITY TO HANDLE TOUGH SITUATIONS... SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN'T DESCRIBE IN JUST ONE WORD...

THE ONE THING I AM FINALLY ABOUT TO GET A HOLD OF!!!
RGH!
FINAL SET.
GAME 5.

Okada slams in powerful serves and follows them with back-to-back Jump Shots without a moment's break...
The audience was mesmerized by the way he kept aiming for an ace without being afraid of the risks.
Although he indeed had some misses, his super shots overwhelmed the drawbacks.

GAME OKADA. 3 - 2. FINAL SET.
He kept the game with a dominant performance.
On the other hand, Eiichirou didn't let Okada hit Jump Shots easily when it was his service game.
Since he was aiming for extreme control, he couldn't avoid making mistakes just like Okada.

AS HE UTILIZED THE ENTIRE COURT, HIS CHANGE-OF-PACE LET HIM MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE GAME BY USING ANGLE CROSSES AT CRITICAL MOMENTS.
15 - 15.
YES!
BOTH PLAYERS SEEMED LIKE THEY WERE AT A STALEMATE,
BUT THE ONE WHO MADE THE FIRST MOVE IN OVERTURNING THIS SITUATION...

ANGLE CROSS!
!?

... WAS OKADA.
I KNEW YOU'D HIT THAT!
YEAH!
HE READ THE TIMING OF MY ANGLE CROSS?

PRECISELY WHEN I REALLY DON'T WANT YOU TO HIT ONE...
OR RIGHT WHEN I FALL INTO A TOUGH SPOT.
YOUR ANGLE CROSS ALWAYS COME EITHER RIGHT BEFORE...
THAT'S WHY I CAN TELL.

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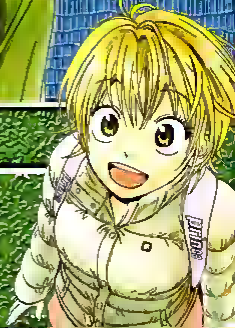
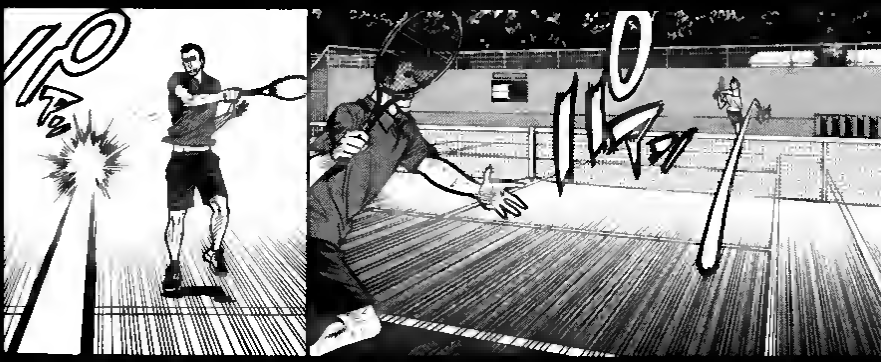
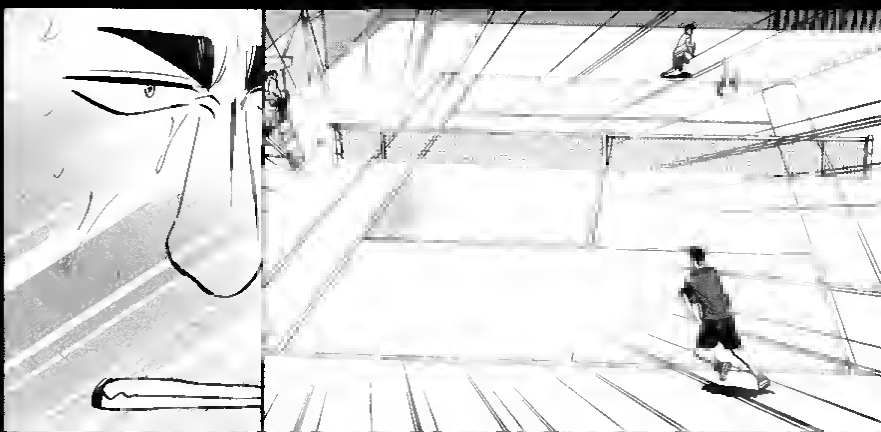


HOW DID HE READ THE TIMING OF MY ANGLE CROSS?
鋭角クロス！
!?
THE MOMENT I FEEL SOMETHING BAD IS THE MOMENT YOU ATTACK.
THAT'S WHY I CAN TELL.
AND THEREFORE, YOU COME UP WITH THE PERFECT ATTACK.
YOU ARE STRONG, YOU'VE GOT STRATEGY AND CONTROL.
I GOT TOO DRAWN TO POSITIVE PLAYERS LIKE YAZAWA-SAN AND IDE,
THAT I THOUGHT I CAN'T HAVE "IT" IF I'M NOT LIKE THEM...
EVER SINCE OKADA RESET HIMSELF FROM THAT MISSED SWING,
OKADA HAS RECOVERED FROM HIS USUAL NEGATIVE MINDSET.
#205
SOLUTION FOR EVERYTHING

BUT... LIKE HOW THEY USE THEIR POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY,

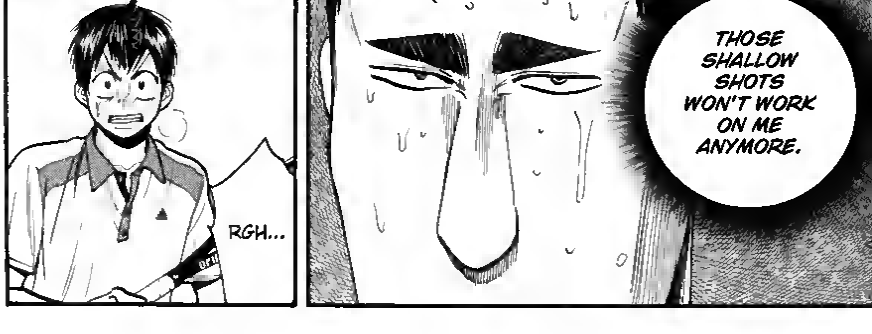


I AM USING MY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TO TURN THIS CRISIS TO MY ADVANTAGE.



!!
THIS "PESSIMISM" IS MY GREATEST WEAPON.

AGAIN... HE GOT ME.
15 - 40.
YES...
110 Toy
ドン


RGH...
THOSE SHALLOW SHOTS WON'T WORK ON ME ANYMORE.

RAMP UP THE SPEED AND EVEN HARDER CONTROL!
SHOOT...
OUT.
GAME OKADA. 4 - 2. FINAL SET.
THAT WAS TOO MUCH!

I II III
6 1 4
3 6 2
A BREAK IN THIS SITUATION...
AND MY WINNING STRATEGY IS CRUMBLING...

THIS IS BAD...

IF HE IS READING MY STRATEGY, THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MAKE A NEW ONE FROM SCRATCH.
スー
ハー
I'VE HAD PLENTY OF TRAINING ON MAINTAINING MY CONCENTRATION
NO. CALM DOWN. DON'T BREAK THE FOCUS BY GETTING DISTRACTED—
カリ カリ カリ

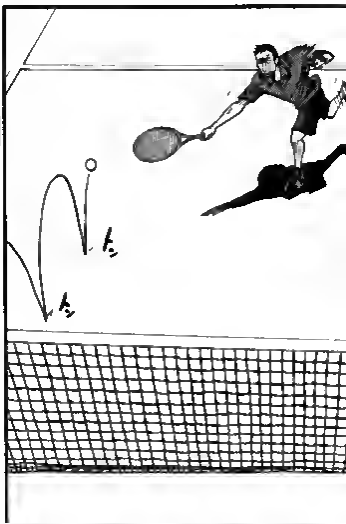
HMGH!
I SOMEHOW RETURNED IT DEEP!

RGH!
JUMP SHOT!
I DON'T HAVE ROOM TO BUILD UP AN ATTACK IN RETURN GAMES!

ANY-WAY...
IF IT'S TOUGH, JUST BUY SOME TIME USING SLICES SINCE THEY HAVE LONG AIR TIMES,
AND ARE HARDER TO RETURN WITH A JUMP SHOT.
RUN BACK TO THE CENTER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!

RGH!
!
!

ARGH, TOUGH LUCK OKADA!
0 - 15.
NICE RETURN, MARUO!!! KEEP IT UP!!

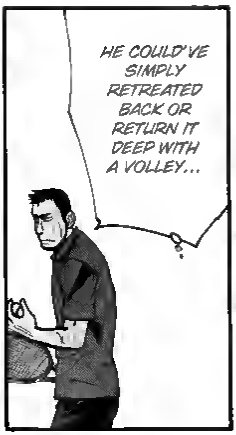


I GOT LUCKY, I'M GETTING COM-PLETELY CRUSHED.
HE MOVED UP?!

HA!
PULL HIM IN. THEN A TOPSPIN LOB!
GO PAST HIM!

HE CAN REACH IT WITH A SMASH!?
ﾀｯ

HOW CAN HE PLAY IN SUCH A RISKY MANNER?
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A PLAYER AIMING FOR THE CHAMPION-SHIP OR PRO JUST LIKE ME...


HE COULD'VE SIMPLY RETREATED BACK OR RETURN IT DEEP WITH A VOLLEY...

OUT! 0 - 30.
TH-THAT WAS DANGER-OUS...

IN MODERN TENNIS WHERE REDUCING RISKS IS THE NORM, IT'S SURPRISING TO SEE SUCH A HIGH-RISK ATTITUDE.
OKADA-KUN IS REALLY STARTING TO BECOME AN AT-TRACTIVE PLAYER

ON THE OTHER HAND, MARUO-KUN USES CONTROL AND STRATEGY BASED ON THOROUGH DATA ANALYSIS.
ALL THIS IN JUST THE SECOND ROUND OF THE JUNIORS. LOOKS LIKE JAPAN'S TENNIS WORLD IS GOING TO GET PRETTY INTERESTING...

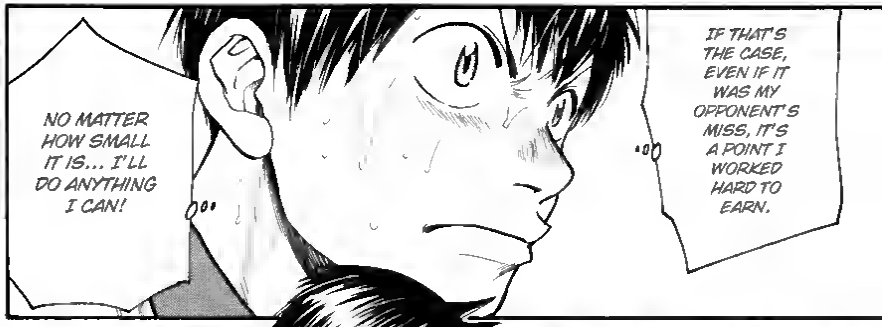
I'VE NEVER PLAYED IN SUCH AN ALL-OR-NOTHING MANNER...
AND I CAN NEVER DO IT.

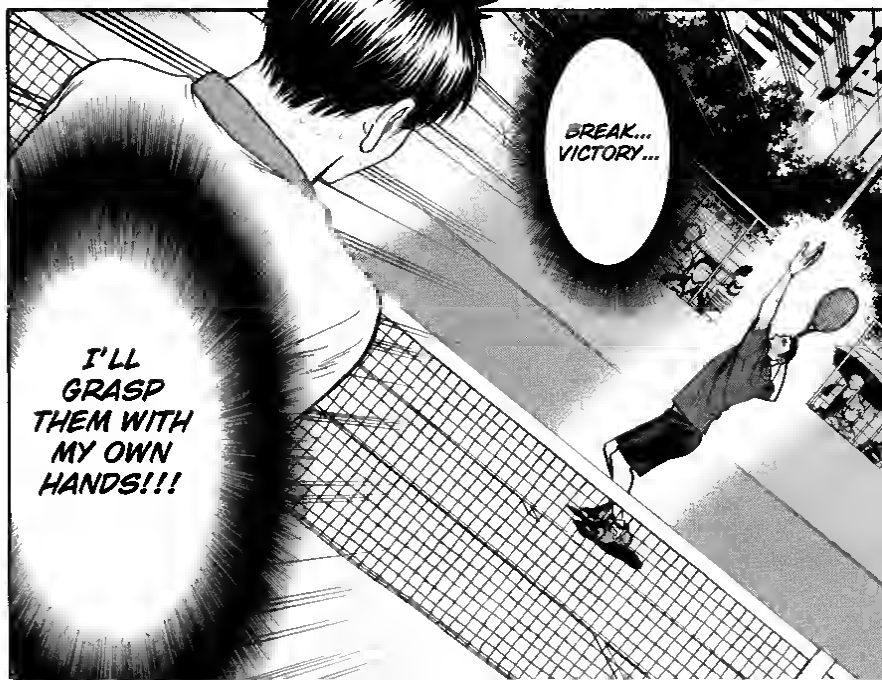
15 - 30.
おお
おお
30 - 30.
CRAP...

THE CRITICAL MATCH THAT WILL DEFINE MY FUTURE IS ALL UP TO OKADA-KUN...
THE MATCH IS GOING TO BE DECIDED BASED ON OKADA-KUN.
IF HE CAN'T, I WIN...
IF OKADA-KUN CAN MAINTAIN THIS CURRENT STATE, HE WINS.
I'M NOT GOING TO BE SATISFIED WITH THAT!
NO MATTER HOW STRONG OKADA-KUN IS...
IF ALL I CAN DO IS RETURN THE SHOTS DEEP, THEN IT'S ABOUT HOW I SHOULD BE RETURNING THEM.
RGH!

30 - 40.
YEAH!!
MARUO~ HANG IN THERE!!
PULL THROUGH THE BREAK POINT TOO!
ATTACK, OKADA! ATTACK!!!
MORE!! MORE!!

I TRIED ADDING A SLIGHT SPIN ON THAT...
SINCE OKADA-KUN'S SHOTS REQUIRE PIN-POINT CONTACT, EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CHANGES SHOULD CREATE A BIG IMPACT.
BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE SMALL CHANGES, IT'S HARD TO TELL IF IT'S ACTUALLY WORKING OR NOT... BUT I THINK IT HAS SOME EFFECT... NO, I'M SURE!!!


IF THAT'S THE CASE, EVEN IF IT WAS MY OPPONENT'S MISS, IT'S A POINT I WORKED HARD TO EARN.
NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT IS... I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN!


BREAK... VICTORY...
I'LL GRASP THEM WITH MY OWN HANDS!!!

Jumping Okada Bazyuuuu—
... Oops, my bad
Wooaaaaaaahh!

Baby Steps

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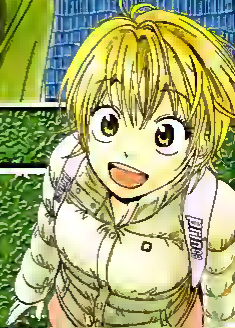


AT IMANGASCANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

"We're currently in a transition period here at ims, most of our staff has left due to personal reasons and we're left with a bare-bone skeleton crew. We're currently looking for someone with experience in scheduling as well as promoting growth within a group. We'd like for ims to survive this drought and move in a positive direction. Please apply if you're interested" -Tammy

SO BASICALLY, WE ARE LOOKING FOR A DOMINATRIX (ADMIN) TO WHIP US BACK IN SHAPE

Cleaners and redrawers (Mags)
Soul Catcher(S)

Most important of all, a Dominatrix!

Cleaners and redrawers (Tanks)
Baby Steps

#206: ONE WHO HAS WHAT IT TAKES

RGH!
ALL I DID WAS TOUCH IT!
BUT SOME-HOW IT STILL MANAGED TO GO IN DEEP!
!

TO THE FURTHEST SPOT IN THE OPEN COURT AS POSSIBLE...
... WITH A SLIGHT SIDE-SPIN.
A HEAVY SLICE...
HMPH!

13
トッ

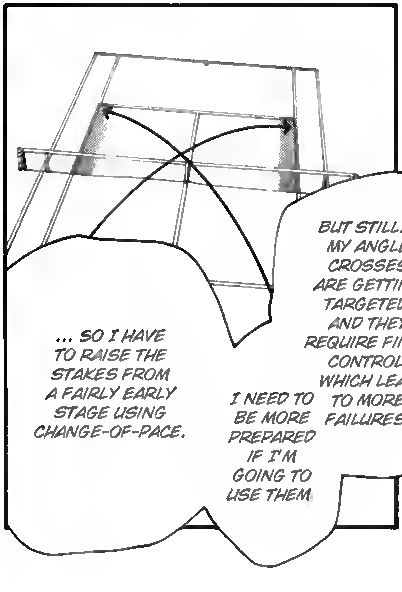
I DID IT! BREAK BACK!
OUT!
GAME, MARUO. 3 - 4. FINAL SET.
WOOAAH!!! A BREAK OUT IN THE FINAL SET!
OKADA WAS CLOSE,
BUT MARUO'S PERSISTENCY WON IN THE END!

ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
prince

ザワ
ザワ
全ジュニアテニス大会
PLAYER
I
II
III
OKADA TAKAYUKI
6
14
MARUO EIICHIROU
3
6
3
DUNLOP

THANK GOODNESS I MANAGED TO BREAK BACK BEFORE THAT!
FROM THIS POINT ON, THE GAME IS PRETTY MUCH DECIDED BY THE ONE WHO BREAKS.

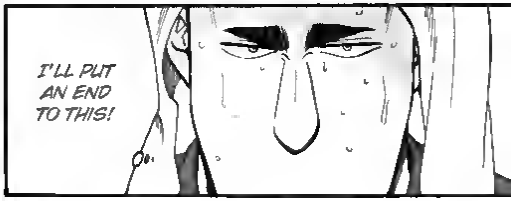
IF I WANT TO SAFELY KEEP MY GAME AGAINST THIS INCREDIBLE OKADA-KUN,
MY SHOTS NEED TO HAVE LARGE VARIATION IN SPEED AND SPIN. ALWAYS STAY SHARP AND AIM FOR REALLY TIGHT CORNERS.


... SO I HAVE TO RAISE THE STAKES FROM A FAIRLY EARLY STAGE USING CHANGE-OF-PACE.
I NEED TO BE MORE PREPARED IF I'M GOING TO USE THEM.
BUT STILL. MY ANGLE CROSSES ARE GETTING TARGETED, AND THEY REQUIRE FINER CONTROL, WHICH LEAD TO MORE FAILURES.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL KEEP ATTACKING EVEN IF I CAN'T ATTACK THE WAY I'M USED TO
THERE'S STILL A CHANCE THAT I'LL STILL GET PUSHED AROUND EVEN WITH THOSE...
I'LL ACTIVELY TRY TO MANIPULATE OKADA-KUN TO MISS.
EVEN WHEN I'M DRIVEN TO A CORNER, I WON'T GO DOWN EASILY.
EVEN WHEN I'M RUNNING AWAY WITH A LOB, THERE HAS TO BE AN OPTIMAL WAY TO DO IT.
REACH THE BALL SOMEHOW AND MIX IN SOME CHANGES TO DISRUPT MY OPPONENT'S AIM.
FOCUS...
SO I CAN DO MY VERY BEST...
UNTIL THE VERY LAST SHOT.

TIME!

IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL JUST KEEP ATTACKING EVEN IF I CAN'T ATTACK THE WAY I'M USED TO.
HIS NOISY LITTLE CHANGES ARE TEMPTING ME TO TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT.


I'LL PUT AN END TO THIS!

IN THE END, I GENUINELY LOVE THIS STYLE.
I'LL MAKE ADJUSTMENTS AND CORRECTIONS IF NECESSARY.
BUT THAT'S AFTER I'M SATISFIED THAT I STAYED FAITHFUL TO MY IDEALS TILL THE END!

I'LL DEFINITELY WIN!

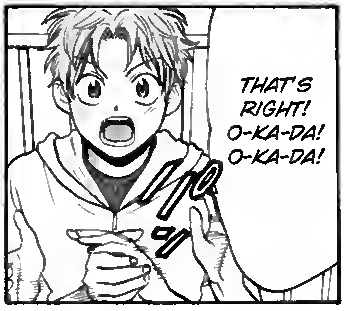
HA!
JUMP FROM THE GET-GO?!

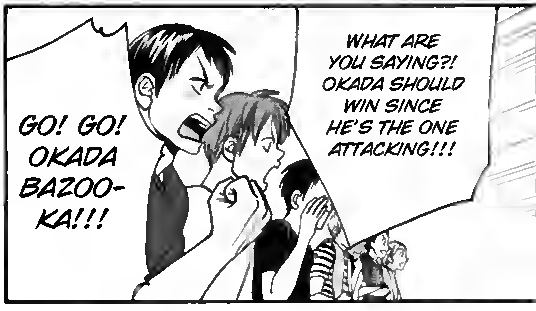
I'LL USE DEEP LOOPING TOPSPINS TO NOT YIELD THE ADVANTAGE I GOT FROM MY SERVE
RGH!

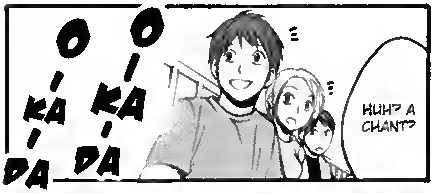
I'LL ADD IN AS MUCH DISRUPTION AS I CAN...
TCH!
RGH!
HMPH!
HE'S DOING HIS BEST TO NOT MAKE AN OPEN COURT.
BUT MARUO ISN'T JUST BLINDLY RETURNING BACK, TOO.
OKADA'S SHOTS ARE INSANE...
WOW...

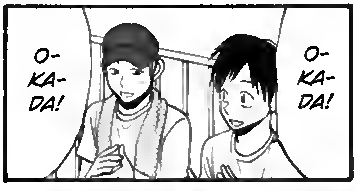
HA!
GAME, MARUO. 4 - 4. FINAL SET.
YES!!

GOOD LUCK!!! HANG IN THERE UNTIL THE END!!!
YOU CAN DEFINITELY BEAT HIM!
NICE, MARUO! GOOD RETURNS!


THAT'S RIGHT! O-KA-DA! O-KA-DA!


GO! GO! OKADA BAZOO-KA!!!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! OKADA SHOULD WIN SINCE HE'S THE ONE ATTACKING!!!


O-KA-DA
O-KA-DA
O-KA-DA
HUH? A CHANT?


O-KA-DA!
O-KA-DA!

13
!?
O-KA-DA
O-KA-DA
O-KA-DA
O-KA-DA

O·KA·DA
HE'S BEEN PLAYING SO HARD, TOO!!!
COME ON! IT'S MORE FUN FOR A NON-SEEDER TO WIN!!
13
O·KA·DA
O·KA·DA
O·KA·DA
THEY'RE RIGHT! MA-RU-O! MA-RU-O!
WHICH SIDE ARE YOU?
MA
RU
O
MA
RU
O
O·KA·DA
O·KA·DA
MA
RU
O
MA
RU
O
what~?
THEY'RE BOTH ENEMIES!
O·KA
ARGH... I WANNA PLAY SO BADLY~~

オーカダ
オーカダ
マルオ
マルオ
オーカダ
IT'S MY FIRST TIME GETTING CHEERED BY COMPLETE STRANGERS IN MY OWN GAME...
オーカダ
マルオ
オーカダ
マルオ
JOESHEN I GIVE UP. THE SOUND EFFECTS IS CHANTING.
WHAT IS THIS...?
WOW...

I'M GETTING ACKNOWLEDGED BY SOME PEOPLE HERE!
PLEASE STAY QUIET.
I'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES, TOO.
I'LL BRING OUT EVERY-THING I HAVE!!

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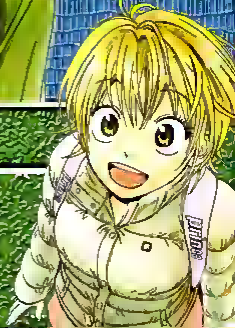


Shh...
Everyone on Court No. 13 watched in silence as if those cheers a moment ago never happened.
The final set has been filled with back-to-back keeps and breaks from both players.
With the score 4 - 4, they entered their 9th game.

#207: FINAL SHOWDOWN

Although it may seem like Okada is the attacker
and Eiichirou the defender,
both players were playing with extremely aggressive tactics.

THIS GAME TURNED OUT TO BE A CLOSE MATCH, ALREADY ON THEIR THIRD DEUCE.
AND AS EXPECT-ED,
THIS POINT BECAME THE CRITICAL POINT THAT DETERMINED THE OUTCOME OF THE MATCH.

Okada's fastest serve of the day barely makes the edge of the box...
RGH!
All Eiichirou could do was touch the ball, resulting in...

FORTUNATELY, IT LANDS RIGHT AT THE EDGE OF OKADA'S BASELINE.
... A HIGH, BACKSPIN LOB.
OKADA SWINGS A GROUND SMASH WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.
EIICHIROU CATCHES IT AT THE LAST MINUTE, AND BUYS SOME TIME USING A SLOW SLICE WITH A SLIGHT SIDE SPIN.

The ball goes in surprisingly deep, making it difficult for Okada again.
As if that didn't matter at all,
Okada quickly moves behind the ball and attacks with his full power rising flat shot.

Knowing that it was a bit reckless, Okada tries to add pressure by moving up more than usual.
Aaa
Eiichirou notices this and makes him face up with a spin lob.
THE TIMING IS MUCH BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE...!

110キロ
Okada is forced to pull back for now with a high back-volley.
Now that both players are on even grounds,
Eiichirou uses this change to control a flat shot to the far corner of the ad court.
The first move towards dragging Okada into Change-of-Pace without a moment's delay.

HOWEVER, OKADA DOES NOT LET HIM MAKE THE NEXT MOVE.
HE COUNTERS WITH A FLAT SHOT THAT SHOWS NO FEAR OF A MISS.

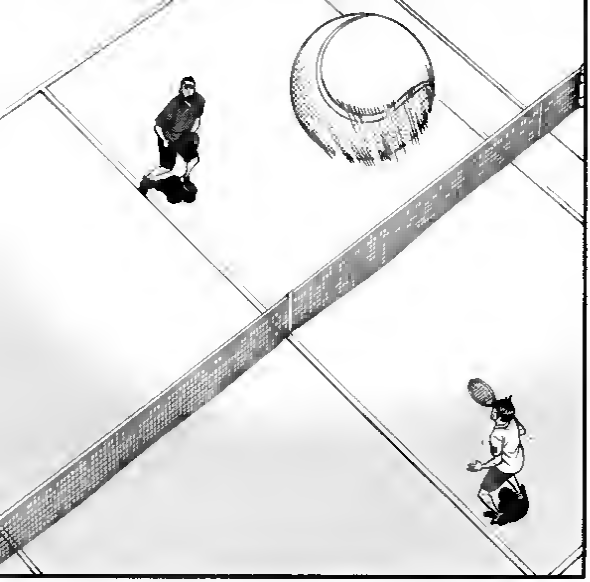
HA
EIICHIROU IS ONCE AGAIN FACING A DIS-ADVANTAGE.
HE COUNTERS WITH A CROSS TO THE OPEN COURT WITH A SMALL SIDE SPIN.
RIGHT WHEN I THOUGHT I FINALLY HAD HIM, HE TURNED IT ALL AROUND WITH JUST ONE SHOT.
WITHOUT GIVING EIICHIROU ANY TIME TO RETURN TO CENTER COURT, OKADA ATTEMPTS A FINISHING BLOW BY LANDING AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL CROSS.
FORCED OFF A CLIFF, EIICHIROU ATTEMPTS FOR A RECOVERY USING A STRONG, HIGH ROTATING TOP-SPIN.

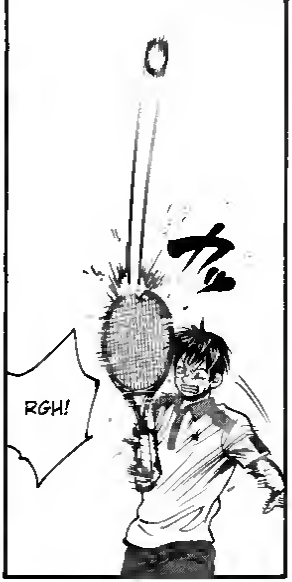
While hitting such shots non-stop, Okada has been thinking...
Despite its appearance, Okada's rising flat shot also requires extremely precise aim, making it a shot that demands a fine touch.
Even though we've been rallying for so long,
over this super critical point...
This is... the end!
He has never returned the same ball twice.
There's no sign of him slowing down.
I'll be at a dis-advantage in the long run...

I CAN ONLY REACH IT WITH A SLICE
IF THAT'S THE CASE..
THIS WILL GO IN, TOO!!!

DROP SHOT...?!
!!
AND... ON THE NET!!
!

THEN THERE'S STILL ONE SPOT WHERE I CAN HIT A FLAT EVEN IF YOU COVER MY AIM...
BODY!!
POP

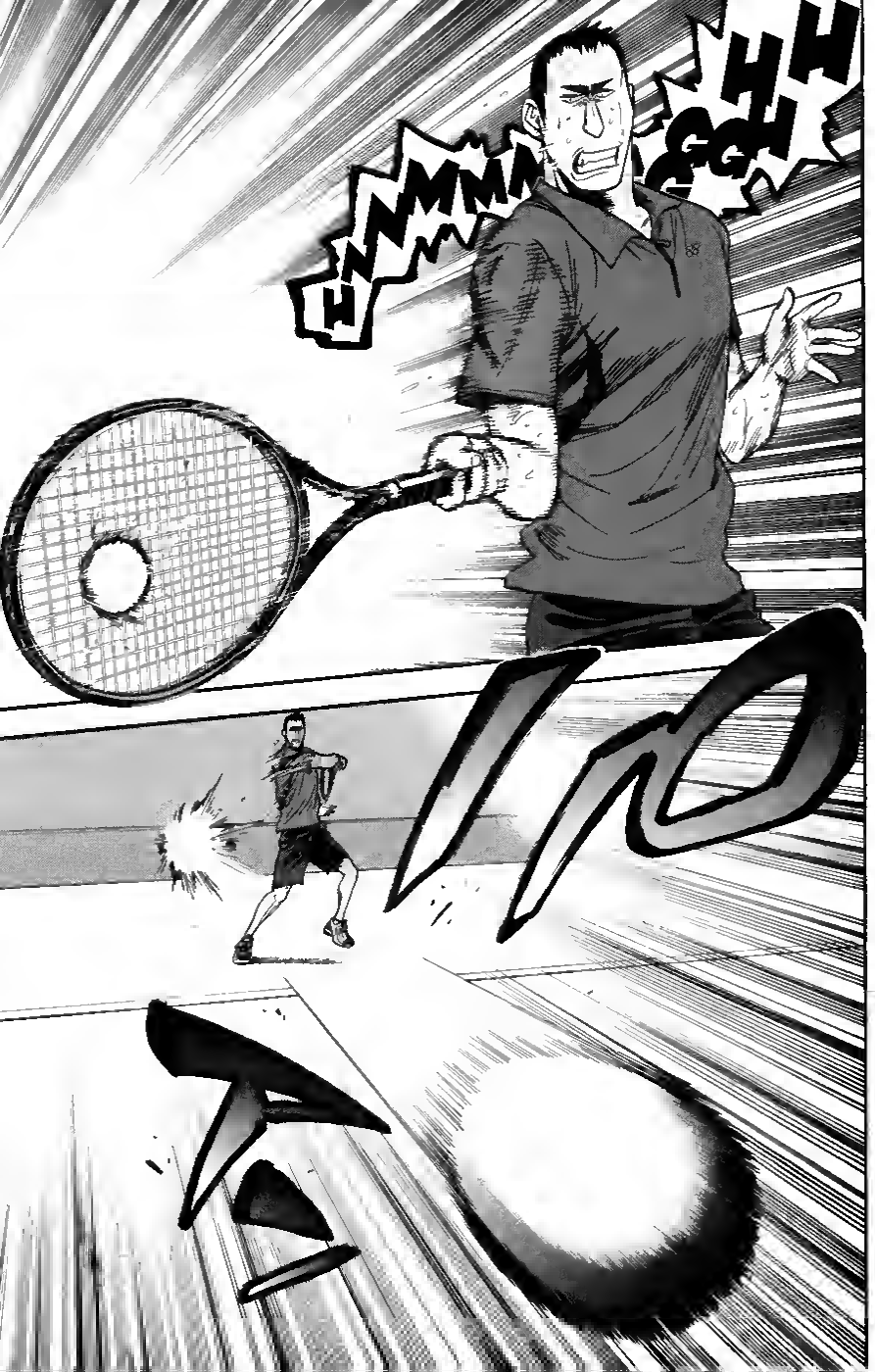



RGH!

At this point, Okada finally realized the critical mistake he'd been making.

ON THE FRAME... BUT... PLEASE GO IN!

He still believed that he was above him in pro skills.
But he finally realized it instinctively.
As each point passed by in the match,
although he'd been feeling more and more threatened by Eiichirou's abilities.
they were both standing at a fairly similar level.
although it was hard to tell because the opponent's tennis was so different from his,
I just have to go even higher!
if that's the case, then even higher...


HNNNNN
HHH
GGH
NO

AT IMANGASCANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

Cleaners and redrawers (Mags)
Soul Catcher(S)

Cleaners and redrawers (Tanks)
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#208 WINNER AND LOSER
WHOA...
RGH!
WHICH IS IT?!

ADVAN-
TANGE
MARUO.
!!

YEAH, MARUO!!! MAKE THE NEXT ONE AND BREAK!!
YOU REALLY GOT TO GET THE NEXT ONE!!!
WOOOW!!! THAT WAS AN INCREDIBLE RALLY!!
SO CLOSE! OKADA, YOU ALMOST HAD IT!
sigh
IN TERMS OF CONTENT, I LOST.
EVEN THOUGH I TRIED EVERY-THING...
BUT... I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT ANYMORE.
I DON'T CARE HOW I PLAY, I JUST WANT TO WIN!!!

!
IT'S MY CHANCE... I'LL BET ON HIS SECOND SERVE.
I'LL SLAM A SHOT THAT HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RETURN EVEN IF HE KNOWS IT.
HE MISSED... AT THIS SUPER CRITICAL POINT.
FAULT!

THIS MIGHT BE MY LAST CHANCE TO WIN!!
!!

FAULT.
DOUBLE FAULT.
GAME, MARUO. 5 - 4. FINAL SET.
BREAK!

I CAN'T LET GO OF THIS CHANCE...
EVEN IF IT'S MY SERVE, MY OPPONENT HAS THE POWER TO UPSET THE SITUATION WITH JUST ONE SWING.
IT'S HERE.
YES!
IF I CAN KEEP THIS, I'LL WIN!!!
I II III
6 14
365

Okada shakes away his hesitation,
Game 10 also turned out to be a dramatic battle with back-to-back deuces.
However, Okada knew that he had been raising the stakes too much.
and aims for a comeback with his proud rising flat shot.
However, the reason that it keeps falling a little short was because of the outcome of the third deuce in the previous game.

AND FINALLY...
THE ONE POINT THAT CAUSED OKADA TO ACKNOWLEDGE MARUO AS HIS EQUAL HAS TURNED THE TIDE OF THE GAME.
OUT!

THE GRAND BATTLE THAT LASTED OVER THREE HOURS AND BECAME THE LONGEST BATTLE OF THE TOURNAMENT
FINALLY CLOSED ITS CURTAINS WITH THE NON-SEEDER CLENCHING THE VICTORY.

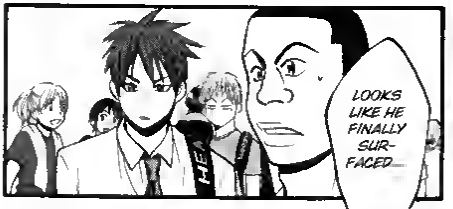
GAME, SET, AND MATCH.
WON BY MARUO EIICHIROU. COUNT: 3 - 6, 6 - 1, 6 - 4.

I WON...

HEY, DID YOU HEAR THAT? OKADA LOST!
REALLY ?!

WHO?
IT WAS A NON-SEEDER FROM KANAGAWA CALLED MARUO EIICHIROU.
APPARENTLY IT'S THE GUY WHO BEAT IDE IN KANTO AND GOT TOP 4.
SO STC?

WHOA, YOU SERIOUS?!


LOOKS LIKE HE FINALLY SUR-FACED...

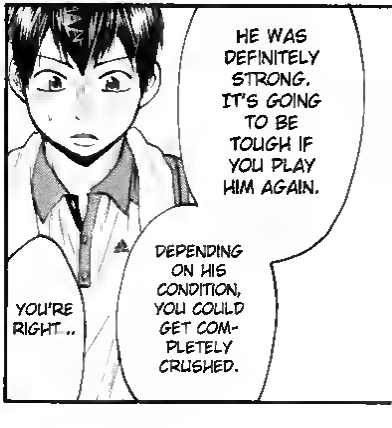
WOOO HOOO!!! HE REALLY BEAT OKADA!
HMM...
I WISH I WAS THERE TO WATCH...
WOW...
COME ON, DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN BEAT OKADA JUST BY STALLING?
MARUO IS THE ONE WHO WON IN THE END.
MARUO WAS PRETTY MUCH WAITING OUT ON MISSES AT THE END.
OKADA FELT MORE PROMISING, TOO.
BUT OKADA SEEMED TO BE ABOVE IN TERMS OF SKILL.
YOU REALLY NEED A LOT OF PATIENCE TO GET A POINT FROM MARUO-KUN.
AH, THAT'S RIGHT...
HE USED TO BE FAMOUS FOR DRAGGING ON SO WELL...

AOI-SAN.
HEY, MARUO!!
GEEZ, YOU REALLY DID WELL.

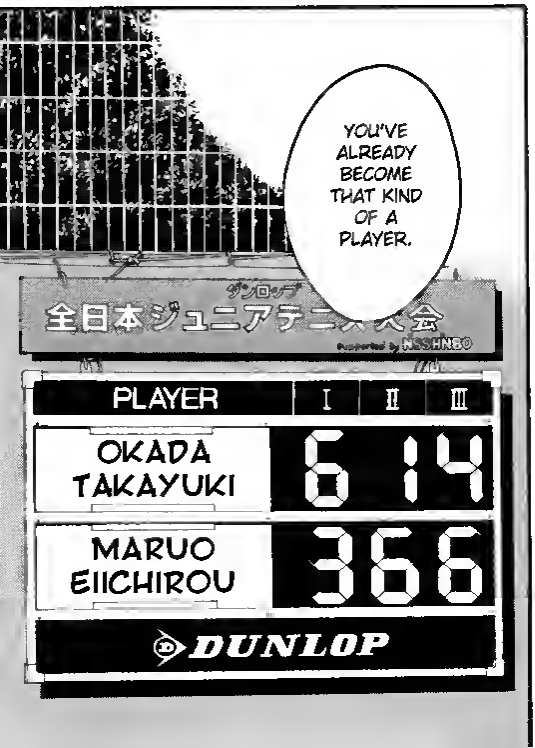
YOU JUST BEAT THE NUMBER 3 PLAYER IN THE NATION.
NO ONE CAN DENY HOW AMAZING THAT IS.

YES... ALTHOUGH I DID MY BEST... I PRETTY MUCH GOT SAVED BY LUCK IN THE END...
THAT WAS PRETTY DANGEROUS. IT GAVE ME THE CHILLS.

BUT LET'S LEAVE THAT STUFF FOR LATER...


YOU'RE RIGHT...
DEPENDING ON HIS CONDITION, YOU COULD GET COMPLETELY CRUSHED.
HE WAS DEFINITELY STRONG. IT'S GOING TO BE TOUGH IF YOU PLAY HIM AGAIN.

I- I'M SO GLAD...
THAT I MANAGED TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ROUND.
...YES!


YOU'VE ALREADY BECOME THAT KIND OF A PLAYER.
ダンロップ
全日本ジュニアテニス大会
Supported by YOMIURI SHIMBUN
PLAYER
I
II
III
OKADA TAKAYUKI
6
1
4
MARUO EIICHIROU
3
6
6
DUNLOP

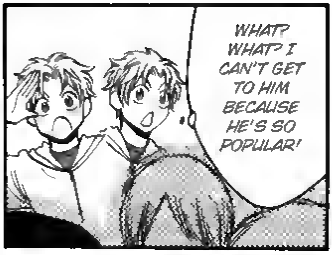
COME ON, DON'T CRY. EVERYONE'S WATCHING.

SHIT!
SHITSHIT-SHITSHIT-SHIT.... I WAS SO CLOSE... I WAS SO SO CLOSE!!!
NO NO NO NO. THAT WAS FINE... THAT IS MY TENNIS!
BUT I SHOULD'VE MASTERED THE JUMP SHOT AT LEAST ONE MONTH EARLIER... NO, I'M NOT LATE YET... THIS IS THE START!!
I'LL GET STRONGER... I WILL!!
EVEN MORE AND MORE STRONGER!

AH, HE FINALLY CAME OUT!
HEY, OKADA-KUN, I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED FROM YOUR MATCH, BUT CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SECOND?
THE OKADA BAZOOKA WAS SO COOL! MAY I ASK WHAT RACKET YOU USE RIGHT NOW?
I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PLANS.
HEY HEY, LET'S GIVE HIM ONE QUESTION AT A TIME. HEY, OKADA-KUN...
Okada Bazooka?
CAN YOU GIVE ME YOUR NUMBER AT LEAST?
HEY, DON'T PUSH.
AH.. HERE'S MY BUSINESS CARD
WHY DON'T YOU START OFF BY AIMING FOR NUMBER 1 IN COLLEGE?
DO YOU PLAN ON BECOMING A PRO? OR COLLEGE?

HUH? OKADA-KUN?
T-THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

I'LL DO MY BEST, TOO!!
YEAH!


WHAT? WHAT? I CAN'T GET TO HIM BECAUSE HE'S SO POPULAR!

I WANTED TO CHEER HIM UP...
BUT IT'S TIME FOR MY FLIGHT, SO I GOTTA GO...

From Ide
Nice work! That was close, but Jumping Okada Bazooka was so cool~
BTW, I was the one who named it Jumping Okada Bazooka ;)
Go get 'em, tiger~!!
It was him--
It's been spreading, you know.

Baby Steps

mangascans.org

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rc.rchighway.net

RAWs:
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Ruggia

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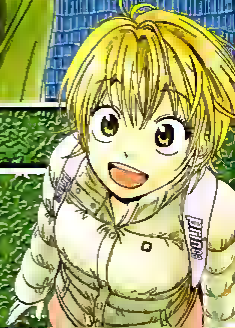


Okada Takayuki
Okada Takayuki
61 60
Kondou Seiji
Maruo Eiichirou
36 61 64
Maruo Eiichirou
Maruo Eiichirou
64 60
Takeda Sousei
HEY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT MARUO EIICHIROU?
YEAH, I JUST SAW HIM PLAY AGAINST OKADA.
ISN'T THAT MARUO?
APPARENTLY HE HAD PRETTY GOOD MATCHES AGAINST NABAE AND ARAYA IN KANTOU.
#209 ATTENTION
DON'T MIND... DON'T MIND...
HE DOESN'T LOOK THAT STRONG THOUGH.
HMM
THIS FEELS UNCOM-FORTABLE.

ANIKI!!!
ANIKI!!!
ANIKI!
ANIKI!
ビッ
Wilson
prince
CONGRATU-LATIONS!!!
YUKICHI-KUN?!

Y-YEAH, THANK YOU...
smile
HOW WAS YOUR GAME?
Y-YOU REALLY BEAT THAT OKADA!
I knew you'd do it!
AS EXPECTED OF MY ANIKI!
... I...
OH... REALLY... UMMM...

I WOONZ!!!
わぉぉん
WHOA!
REALLY?!
YES! EVEN THOUGH THAT NONOZAKI FROM THE FAMOUS KINZEI HIGH WAS MY OPPONENT,
I HAD A SUPER COMEBACK AND THE GREAT SHOWDOWN TO GO 1-6, 7-6, 7-5!!! IT WAS AN EPIC VICTORY!!
W-WOW!
IT SEEMED LIKE HIS LEGS WERE HURTING A BIT, BUT WHO CARES!!
I'VE GOT TWO WINS IN MY FIRST TIME IN THE NATIONALS!
I can't believe it!!!
THAT MEANS...

YES!
THE THIRD ROUND WILL BE OUR VERY FIRST OFFICIAL MATCH!
I MEAN, IF ANIKI WERE TO BECOME A PRO, I WON'T HAVE ANY CHANCE TO PLAY WITH YOU ANYMORE...
YUKICHI-KUN...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE DAY I HAVE AN OFFICAL MATCH AGAINST ANIKI HAS FINALLY COME..
IT WAS MY DREAM, YOU KNOW?
HUH?
ARGH〰 BUT IT'S ANIKI〰
IT HURTS MY HEAD JUST THINKING ABOUT IT〰
BUT I'LL BE SERIOUS, YOU KNOW! I WON'T GO DOWN EASILY!

YUP!
ぎゅっ
wa!!
wa!!

NACCHAN?
SECOND ROUND... DID YOU WIN?!
Y-YUP.

THANK GOOD-NESS〰
HOW WAS YOUR MATCH, NACCHAN?
I'M GETTING EVEN MORE ATTENTION NOW
AND WHEN I FINALLY FOUND EI-CHAN, YOU WERE MAKING SUCH A SERIOUS FACE SO
IT WAS ALREADY FINISHED BY THE TIME I GOT TO COURT 13,
OOOOHHH, CONGRATU-LATIONS!
I WON TOO!
REALLY?! WOW!
I ADVANCED TO THE THIRD ROUND!

I WAS ABLE TO HEAR THE CHEERS FROM MY OWN COURT.
"MARUO! MARUO!"
IT SOUNDED LIKE AN INCREDIBLE MATCH!
NAH... THE ONE WHO WAS REALLY AMAZING WAS OKADA-KUN...
I TRIED EVERY-THING I COULD TOO, BUT...
IT SEEMED LIKE ALL I WAS DOING WAS RUNNING AWAY AND GETTING SAVED BY LUCK.
GEEZ, NOT THAT AGAIN...
REGARDLESS OF HOW IT LOOKS, THE ONE WHO WINS AT THE END IS THE REAL WINNER!
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A ONE-HIT KO IN TENNIS!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND EI-CHAN? BEATING THE NO. 3 PLAYER IN THE NATION IS AN INCREDIBLE ACCOMPLISHMENT!!
Y-YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...

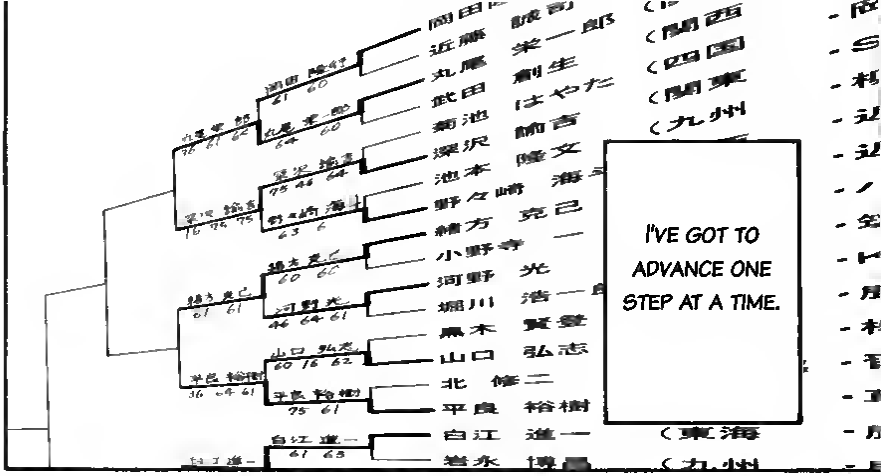
I'VE BEEN WISHING FOR IT TO HAPPEN, AND IT FINALLY DID!
THAT MAKES ME HAPPY~~
EI-CHAN'S A SUPER HIGH-PROFILE PLAYER IN THE NATION NOW.
prince
I THINK ALL THE ATTENTION I'M GETTING RIGHT NOW IS CAUSE OF NACCHAN...
She's so cute...
He's flirting with Takasaki Natsu...
That's Mariko?
BUT... THIS IS A BIT EMBARRASSING...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, KIDDO...
AH... AOI-SAN.

Y-YES SIR!
YOU NEED TO GET USED TO IT.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN WIN WITHOUT GETTING A LOT OF ATTENTION.

ONLY 1/4 OF THE PLAYERS ARE REMAINING...
THE SECOND DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT HAS ENDED.

I'M ONLY AT THE SECOND ROUND.
ALTHOUGH I OVERCAME ONE OF THE BIG HURDLES...
IN ORDER TO WIN THE TITLE, I NEED TO WIN FOUR MORE TIMES.

EVEN FOR STC, KOUSAKA-SAN ENDED UP GOING BACK.


I'VE GOT TO ADVANCE ONE STEP AT A TIME.

DOES THAT MAKE YOU UNEASY?
NO, NOT REALLY ..

SO IT'S YUKICHI TOMOR-ROW...
prince

SINCE YOU HAVEN'T LOST AT ALL THESE DAYS IN PRACTICE MATCHES, YOU JUST HAVE TO PLAY BY THE BOOK.
WELL I GUESS THAT'S NORMAL.
SINCE YOU BOTH KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EACH OTHER.
YOU CAN'T LOWER YOUR GUARD.
ALTHOUGH YUKICHI WON'T BECOME A PRO,
HE REALLY GOT STRONG AFTER YOU CAME TO STC
OF COURSE...
HE MUST HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY YOU...
YOU TWO ARE BOTH MY BELOVED STUDENTS,
SO I'LL GO SCOUT FOR THE FOURTH ROUND INSTEAD OF WATCHING THE GAME.
AH, THANK YOU!
ALRIGHT, DONE!
T-THANK YOU SO MUCH...

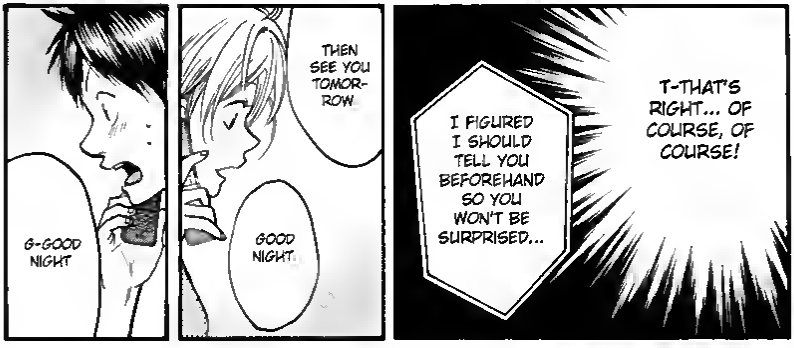
THEN I'LL GO TAKE CARE OF YUKICHI NOW
GOOD NIGHT~~
GOOD NIGHT~~
THAT FELT GOOD...
HE CALLED ME "ANIKI" NOT LONG AFTER I JOINED STC....
アニキって呼んでいいですか!?
そ・それはやめてください!
HE LOVED TENNIS AND TAUGHT ME A LOT WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
HE ALWAYS GAVE ME INFO ABOUT MY OPPONENTS, BEFORE MY MATCHES.
HE HELPED ME PRACTICE LATE ALL THE TIME...
IT WAS MY DREAM, YOU KNOW?
I MEAN, IF ANIKI WERE TO BECOME A PRO, THEN I WON'T HAVE A CHANCE TO PLAY WITH YOU ANYMORE...

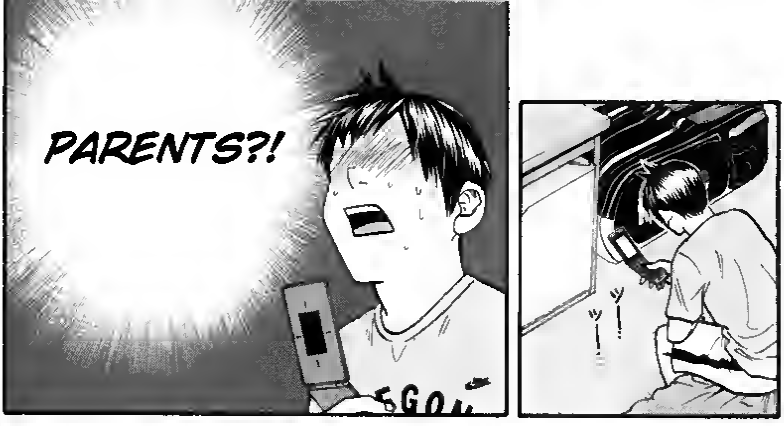
9 PM
AH... IT'S NACCHAN.
REGON
...HUH?
OOPS! I FEEL ASLEEP
HELLO, NACCHAN?
YEAH, I ACCIDENTALLY FELL ASLEEP FOR A BIT THANK YOU FOR WAKING ME UP
OH, THANK GOODNESS.
EI-CHAN?
SORRY, WERE YOU ASLEEP?

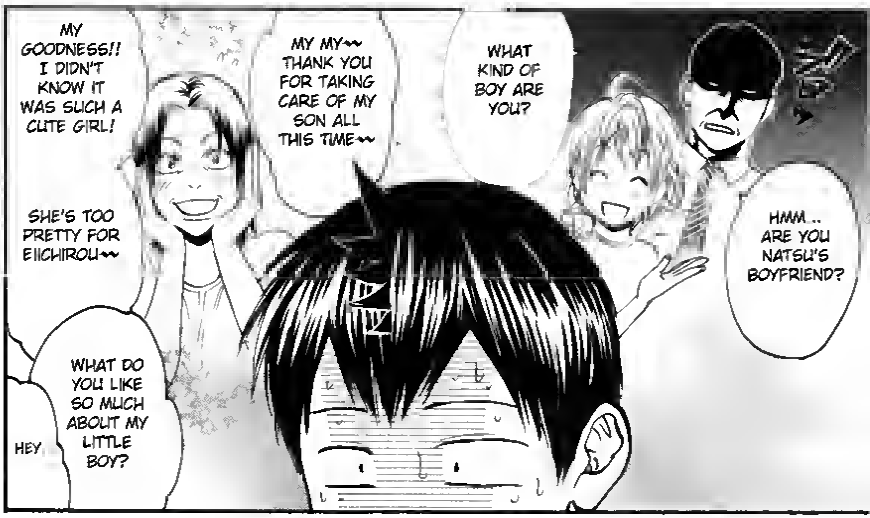
THEY SAID THAT THEY'LL COME CHEER FOR ME TOMORROW...
OHH! REALLY?!
IT'S TOTALLY FINE.
SO I CAN JUST TELL YOU TOMORROW INSTEAD.
AH, IT'S NOT THAT BIG OF A DEAL,
YOU KNOW, ABOUT MY PARENTS I GAVE THEM A CALL AFTER-WARDS...
LAST NIGHT?
... REALLY? DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT LAST NIGHT?
AH, THAT'S RIGHT. MY MOM IS COMING TOMORROW TOO...
OH...
YUP, IT'S ALL THANKS TO EI-CHAN.
NO, NOT AT ALL...
THAT'S GOOD NEWS!
SINCE THAT'S THE CASE...

I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO MY PARENTS TOMORROW.

AH... Y-YES!! G-GOT IT.
WHAA~!?


G-GOOD NIGHT
THEN SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
GOOD NIGHT.
I FIGURED I SHOULD TELL YOU BEFOREHAND SO YOU WON'T BE SURPRISED...
T-THAT'S RIGHT... OF COURSE, OF COURSE!


PARENTS?!


MY GOODNESS!! I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS SUCH A CUTE GIRL!
MY MY~~ THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF MY SON ALL THIS TIME~~
WHAT KIND OF BOY ARE YOU?
HMM... ARE YOU NATSU'S BOYFRIEND?
SHE'S TOO PRETTY FOR EIICHIROU~~
HEY
WHAT DO YOU LIKE SO MUCH ABOUT MY LITTLE BOY?

W-WHAT SHOULD I DO..

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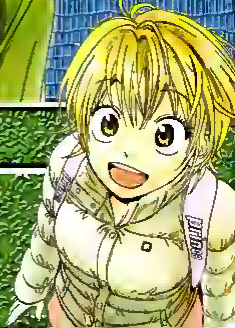
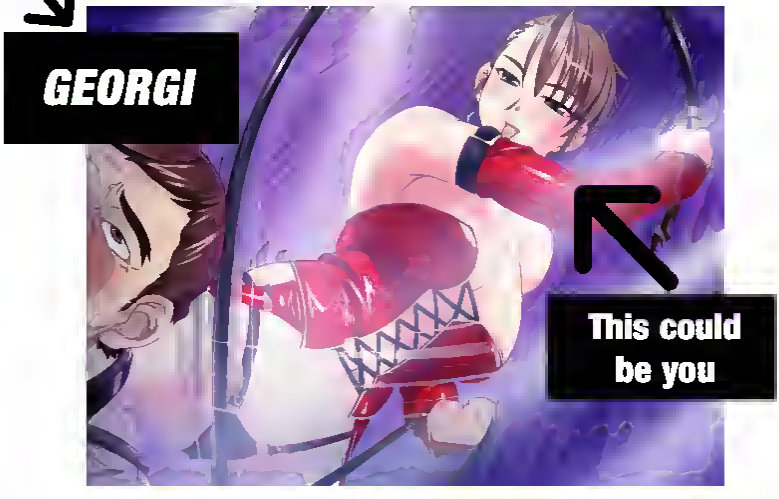


AT IMANGASCANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR:



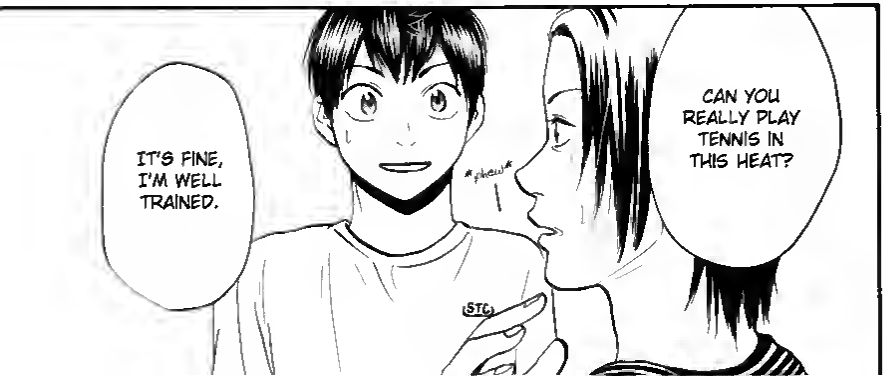
Cleaners and redrawers (Mags)
Soul Catcher(S)

Cleaners and redrawers (Tanks)
Last Inning

全日本ジュニアテニス大会 'XX
そわ
そわ
ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR TENNIS COMPETITION.
DAY 3.

MOM!
STC

EIICHIROU
#210 CLASH!


IT'S FINE, I'M WELL TRAINED.
ahem
CAN YOU REALLY PLAY TENNIS IN THIS HEAT?
STC

それ
それ
HMM... SHOULD BE INTER-ESTING...
WHEN DOES IT START?
YUP. YUKICHI-KUN AND I ALWAYS PRACTICE TOGETHER AND WE ARE GOOD FRIENDS.
YOUR OPPONENT TODAY IS FROM THE SAME CLUB AS YOU.
EI-CHAN!! HERE! HERE!!
HUH? AH.. YES.
EICHIROU, ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?
NACCHAN!
NAC-CHAN?

NICE TO MEET YOU, I'M EI-CHAN'S GIRLFRIEND,
TAKASAKI NATSU!
MY PARENTS ARE ALSO HERE TODAY, SO WE DECIDED TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES TOGETHER.

N-NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M MARUO EIICHIROU.
eh!?
THIS IS THE EI-CHAN I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT.
NICE TO MEET YOU~ THANKS FOR TAKING GOOD CARE OF NATSU~
My, he's very polite.
I...
AH...
SO YOU ARE CALLED "EI-CHAN" BECAUSE YOU GET ALL A'S?
You don't feel like a stranger at all~.
NATSU'S TOLD US A LOT ABOUT YOU
I'M SORRY... I DON'T GET ALL A'S ANYMORE. HALF OF THEM ARE B'S NOW...

は
はは
は
は
IT'S LIKE NATSU SAID. IT'S INTERESTING SEEING YOU BEING SO HARD ON YOURSELF~
IT'S THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF OUR CHILD.
COME ON... DON'T LAUGH TOO MUCH.

*SNIFFR
DAD!!!
HMMM... CAN YOU TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT SHE HAS BEEN DOING FOR YOU?
UMM.. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE THINGS NACCHAN HAS DONE FOR ME!

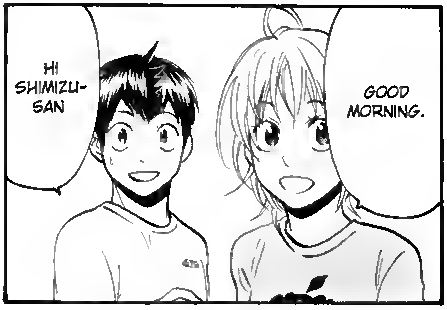
JOESHEN: I AM SORRY I JUST ABOUT DIED LAUGHING AT THIS.

Don't say anything, okay?!
As your father I have to...
BUT IT'S INCREDIBLE! HE STARTED TENNIS IN HIGH SCHOOL, YET HE'S ALREADY IN THE NATIONALS!
SO HOW COME YOU GET TO DATE SUCH A PRETTY GIRL?
MOM
OF COURSE.
ACTUALLY, WILL YOU BE OKAY TEACHING ME MORE ABOUT IT?
THANK YOU SO MUCH. THIS IS ACTUALLY MY FIRST TIME SEEING MY SON PLAY...
I'M SORRY, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT TENNIS
AH... IS IT?
FUTURE ROADMAP... THIS IS AMAZING!
THAT'S... UM... EXCUSE ME...
WHAT'S THAT?! Show me!
THAT'S MINE... HEY, WHY DID YOU BRING IT HERE?!
Future Roadmap
MY SON BARELY TELLS US ANYTHING ABOUT TENNIS AT HOME.
SO THIS IS ALL I HAVE FOR REFERENCE...

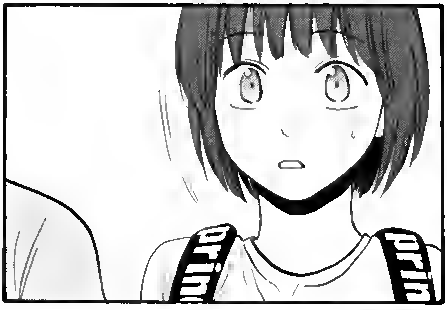
THAT SHOULD BE ALL YOU NEED IN ORDER TO WIN.
FOR YOUR NEXT MATCH, IF IT GETS HARD JUST AIM FOR HER BACKHAND
Somebody In
CHACO
AKI, WHAT'S WRONG? ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?
THEN WHAT IS IT?
YOU SEEMED TO BE IN A BAD MOOD SINCE YESTERDAY...
YOU WON'T GET ANY BETTER IF YOU KEEP HOLDING IT IN.
... I'M FINE.
THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN JUST TENNIS.

OH...

.....


HI SHIMIZU-SAN
GOOD MORNING.

IT'S TAKASAKI-SAN! NICE TO SEE YOU~
AH... AKI-CHAN AND HER MOM!



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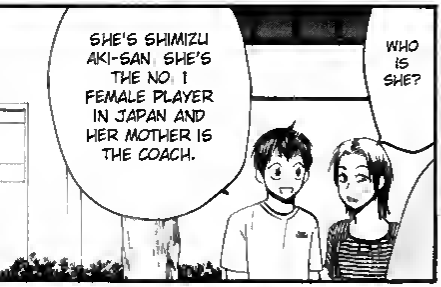
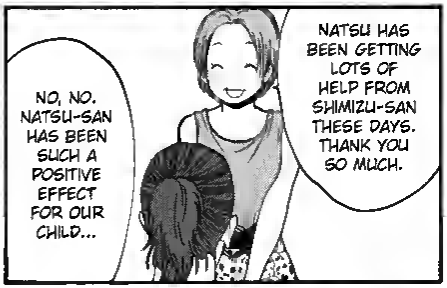
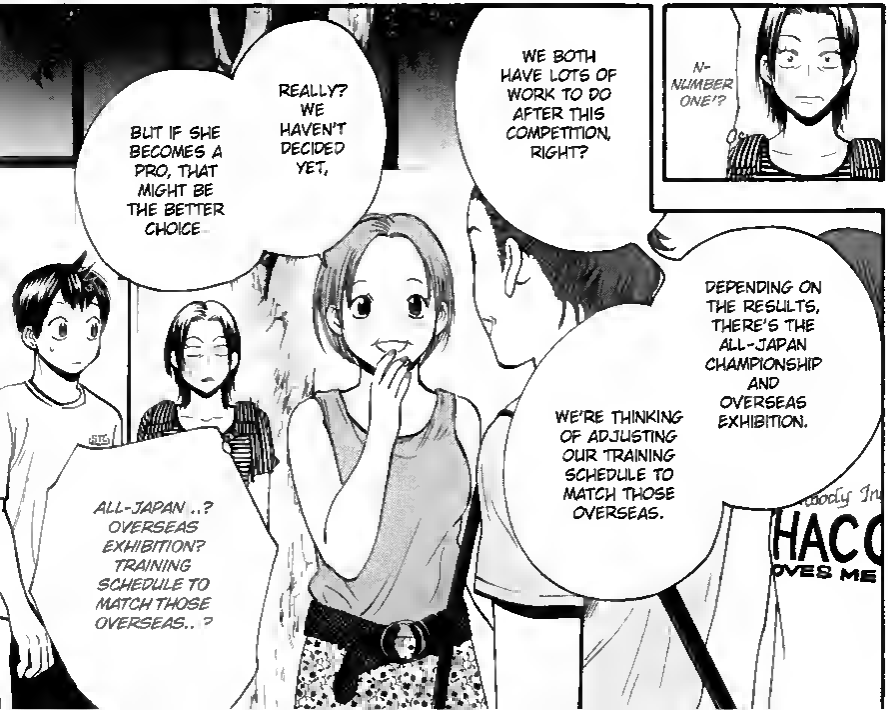

WHO IS SHE?
SHE'S SHIMIZU AKI-SAN. SHE'S THE NO. 1 FEMALE PLAYER IN JAPAN AND HER MOTHER IS THE COACH.


NATSU HAS BEEN GETTING LOTS OF HELP FROM SHIMIZU-SAN THESE DAYS. THANK YOU SO MUCH.
NO, NO. NATSU-SAN HAS BEEN SUCH A POSITIVE EFFECT FOR OUR CHILD...

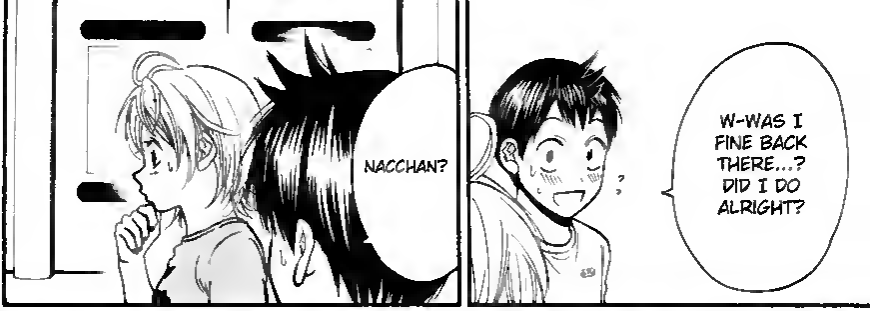

WE BOTH HAVE LOTS OF WORK TO DO AFTER THIS COMPETITION, RIGHT?
N-NUMBER ONE!?
REALLY? WE HAVEN'T DECIDED YET,
BUT IF SHE BECOMES A PRO, THAT MIGHT BE THE BETTER CHOICE
DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS, THERE'S THE ALL-JAPAN CHAMPIONSHIP AND OVERSEAS EXHIBITION.
WE'RE THINKING OF ADJUSTING OUR TRAINING SCHEDULE TO MATCH THOSE OVERSEAS.
ALL-JAPAN ..? OVERSEAS EXHIBITION? TRAINING SCHEDULE TO MATCH THOSE OVERSEAS..?

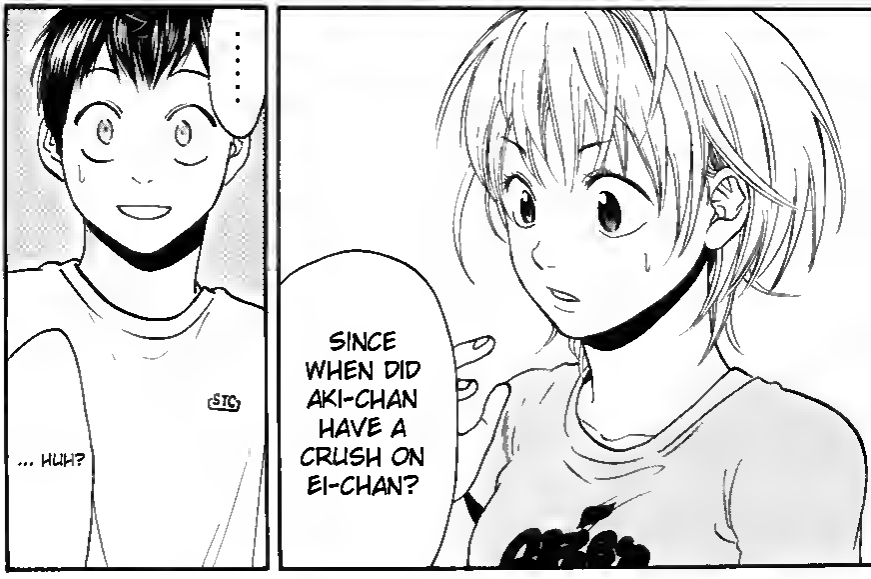
AH, YES. I'M MARUO EIICHIROU.
THAT'S RIGHT... WE MET AT STC BEFORE, RIGHT?
ARE YOU THE RUMORED MARUO-KUN THAT BEAT THE THIRD-SEEDER YESTERDAY?
AH... YES, THAT'S ME.
YOU MUST BE REALLY GOOD UNDER PRESSURE TO WIN AGAINST A SEEDED PLAYER LIKE THAT.
HEY, MOM...
I HEARD THAT MATCH WAS INCREDIBLE! WE HEARD THE CHEERS, TOO.
Somebody In CHACO LOVES ME!
YOU'VE HEARD HOW ONE STARTS RIDING THE WAVE ONCE YOU WIN A DRAMATIC MATCH, RIGHT?
WAIT A SECOND, MOM ..
MY GIRL HASN'T HAD A MATCH LIKE THAT LATELY, SO IT WOULD BE GREAT IF YOU CAN GIVE HER SOME ADVICE.
NOT AT ALL... I GOT LUCKY YESTERDAY...

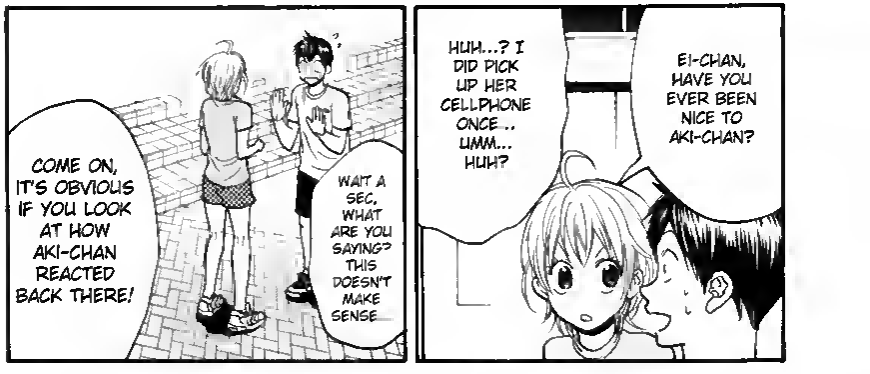
... STOP, MOM!!
IF YOU HAVE TIME, CAN YOU...
JUST HEARING ABOUT IT BEFORE A MATCH CAN BE REALLY HELPFUL.
W-WAIT A SECOND, WHAT'S WRONG...?
LET'S GO! WE DON'T HAVE TIME!
blush
?
はっ

AH...
PRINCE
き!!
よっ
タッ
PLEASE EXCUSE ME, I MUST GO...
タッ
HUH?! W-WAIT A SECOND... AK!?
Wait!
タッ
PRINCE
Somebody I'm CHACO LOVES

HUH...? DID SHE JUST CRY?
What's going on?
...
HEY~...
OH... NICE TO SEE YOU, YOU'RE ALL HERE.
AH, COACH AOI. NICE TO SEE YOU~
THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF OUR CHILD EVERY-DAY~
NAH~ THANK YOU
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A LOT OF TROUBLE COMING ALL THE WAY HERE TO OSAKA.
whew
WOW... MY HEAD'S GETTING CONFUSED FROM ALL THE STUFF THAT HAPPENED...
BUT THANK GOODNESS MY MOM AND NACCHAN'S PARENTS ARE GETTING ALONG...
IT WOULD BE GREAT IF MY MOM GETS INFLUENCED BY THEM AND START PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO TENNIS.


NACCHAN?
W-WAS I FINE BACK THERE...? DID I DO ALRIGHT?

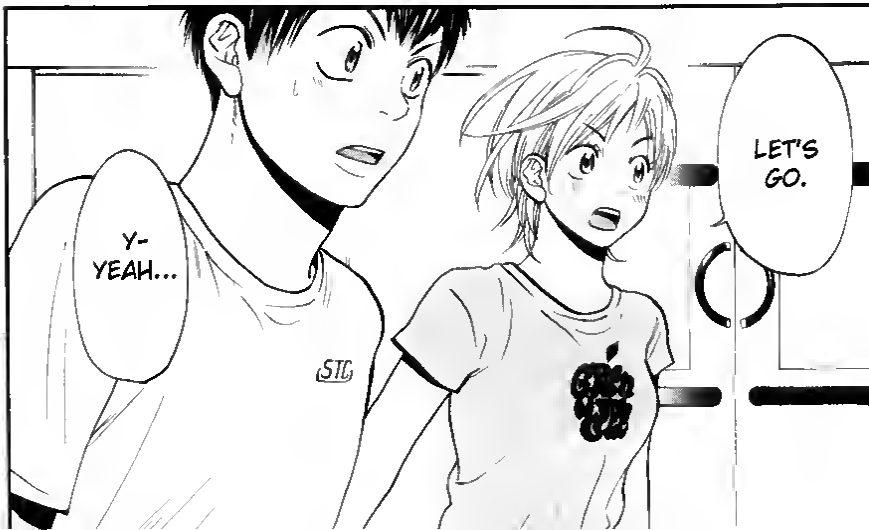

.....
... HUH?
SINCE WHEN DID AKI-CHAN HAVE A CRUSH ON EI-CHAN?


COME ON, IT'S OBVIOUS IF YOU LOOK AT HOW AKI-CHAN REACTED BACK THERE!
WAIT A SEC, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...
HUH...? I DID PICK UP HER CELLPHONE ONCE.. UMM... HUH?
EI-CHAN, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN NICE TO AKI-CHAN?

A CRUSH...? I'VE ONLY TALKED TO SHIMIZU-SAN LIKE THREE TIMES...
THAT DOESN'T MATTER!
UMM... WHY ARE YOU ANGRY?
I'M NOT ANGRY.
EI-CHAN IS MY BOYFRIEND ANYWAY.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO BE ANGRY.
BUT...
ARGH
I LIKE HIM MORE
WHAT?

I DON'T WANT TO LOSE TO AKI-CHAN...

AH, YES!
HEEEEYY~~~ MARUO—! NATSU! IT'S TIME FOR YOUR WARM UPS!
STC


Y- YEAH...
LET'S GO.
STC

HEY, MOM~ DON'T BE NERVOUS! YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME NERVOUS, TOO!
STC
It is almost 10 AM.
All players participating in the Men's Third Round, please go to your designated court and begin practicing.
YOU DIDN'T FORGET ABOUT THE PROMISE, RIGHT? REMEMBER!
You said you'll acknowledge it if I w n
I KNOW ..
... OKAY!
SFX FWOO~
AH, YUP!
ANIKI~ IT'S ALMOST TIME!

I'LL DEFINITELY WIN. SO WATCH CAREFULLY.

WHILE I WASN'T LOOKING.
IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S GROWN A LOT..

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rc.rchighway.net

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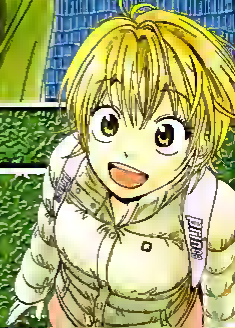
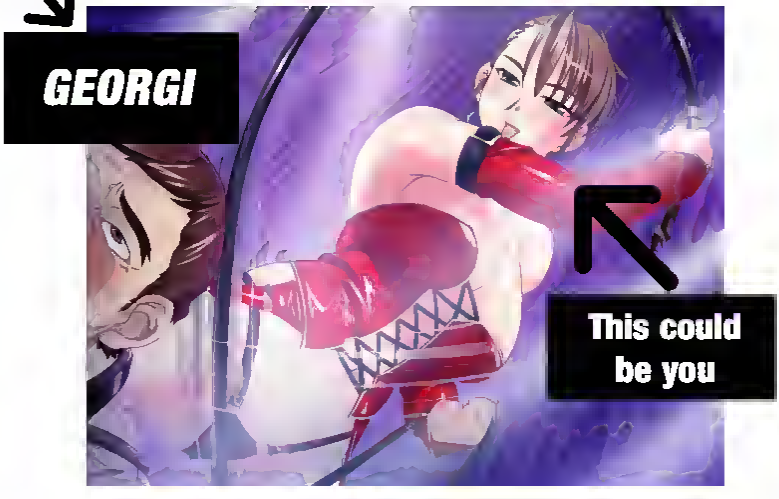
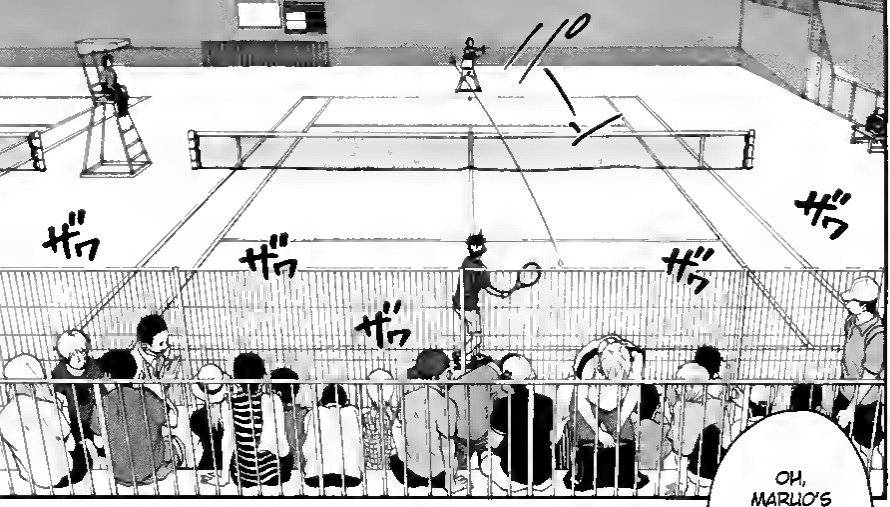


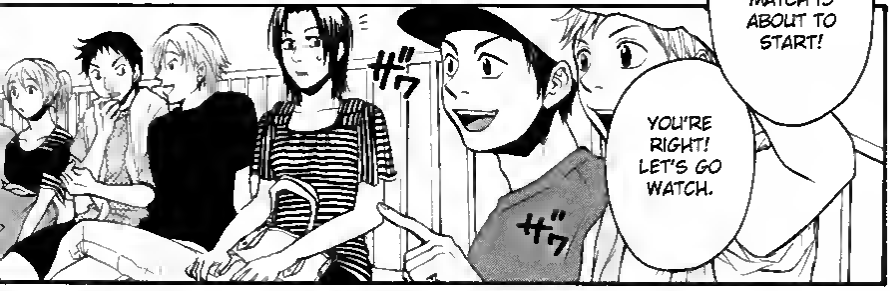
AT IMANGASCANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

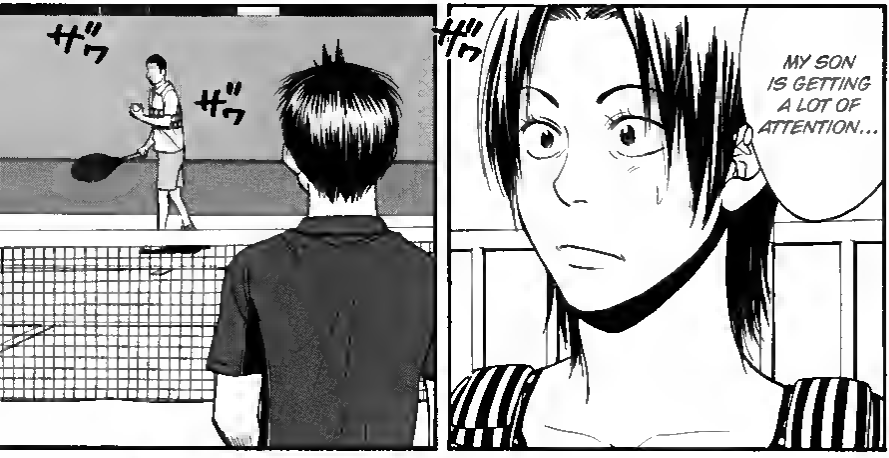


Cleaners and redrawers (Mags)
Soul Catcher(S)

Cleaners and redrawers (Tanks)
Last Inning







#211 MIRACLE TO BE THE PRO

I ALWAYS WIN AGAINST YUKICHI-KUN IN PRACTICE.
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN IF I PLAY THE WAY I USUALLY DO.
BUT... PRACTICE MATCHES AND ACTUAL MATCHES ARE DIFFERENT IN MANY WAYS.
PLAYING NORMALLY IS ESPECIALLY TOUGH...
AND MY MOM'S HERE TO WATCH FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY..
THIS IS THE ALL-JAPAN TOURNAMENT THAT I ABSOLUTELY CANNOT LOSE. IT'S NOT OUR USUAL COURT IN STC EITHER
YUKICHI-KUN HAS BEEN PLAYING AT HIS BEST CONDITION THESE DAYS..
I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO PLAY THE WAY I NORMALLY DO...
CALM DOWN... FOCUS.
IF I FIND EVEN THE SLIGHTEST OPENING, I'LL LAUNCH AN ATTACK WITHOUT HOLDING BACK!!

THE DAY HAS FINALLY COME!
FUFU-FUFU-FU-FU...
I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON TENNIS!
I PLAN ON STAYING CONNECTED TO TENNIS FOREVER!
ANIKI.. ALTHOUGH I AM A MAN WHO HAS GIVEN UP ON BECOMING A PRO...
YOU KNOW THAT TOO, RIGHT ANIKI?
I'VE BEEN LOSING EVERY SINGLE MATCH LATELY, BUT THOSE WERE JUST PRACTICE.
REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, THE ONE WHO WINS TODAY IS THE REAL VICTOR!
NOW THAT I HAVE FULFILLED MY DREAM TO PLAY A MATCH AGAINST ANIKI...
THAT'S WHY I NEED TO SET A COURSE FOR MY FUTURE
NEXT I'LL CHALLENGE FOR THE ULTIMATE DREAM OF SURPASSING ANIKI!!

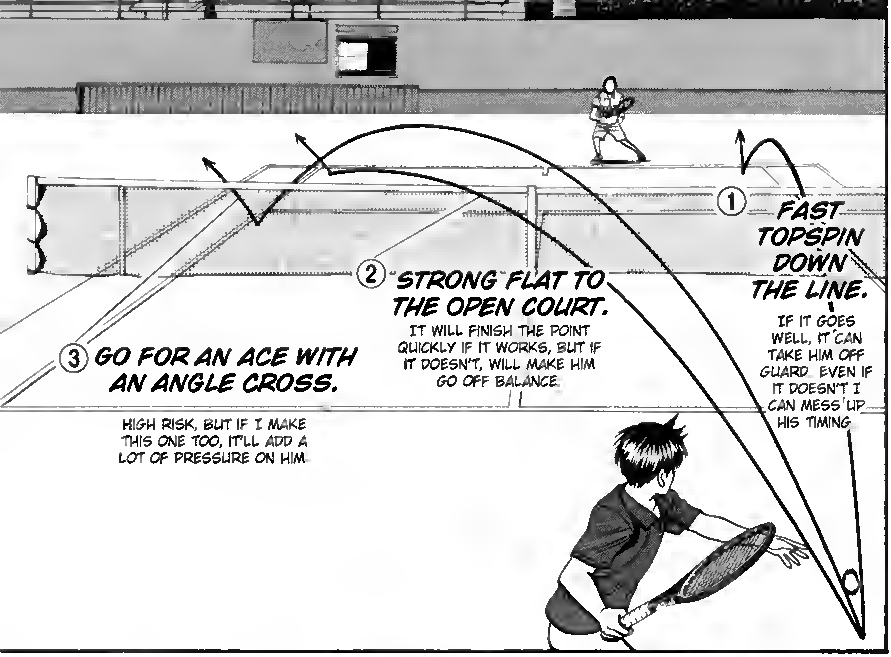
THREE SET MATCH.
FUKAZAWA'S SERVICE PLAY.
FOCUS!!
HERE I GO!
ズッ

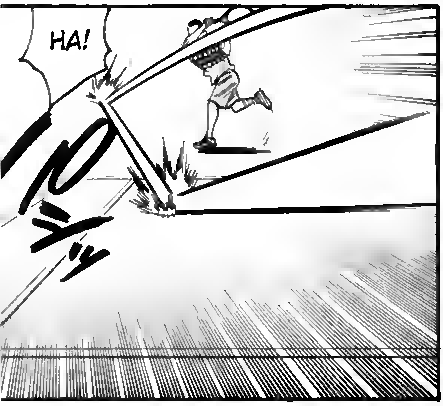
HA!
DEEP SPIN CROSS!

!
CAN I DO IT?
OR SHOULD I WAIT...
THIS IS MY RETURN GAME,
GO!

!
YES!
0 - 15.
!
...
THAT IS MARUO'S CONTROL!
OHHH, LOOK! A SHORT CROSS ALREADY!
T-THAT WAS TOO WEAK... THAT'S MY ANIKI
THAT WAS MY USUAL NO, EVEN BETTER THAN THAT
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IRREGULARITY CAN BE A GOOD THING

HA!
WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THIS FOREHAND.
I HAVE A TON OF OPTIONS AT ALL TIMES RIGHT NOW.
ALTHOUGH I HAD NO ROOM TO REST AGAINST OKADA-KUN,
JUST AS I EXPECTED... THE PREVIOUS MATCH HAD A HUGE EFFECT.


① FAST TOPSPIN DOWN THE LINE.
IF IT GOES WELL, IT CAN TAKE HIM OFF GUARD EVEN IF IT DOESN'T I CAN MESS UP HIS TIMING
② STRONG FLAT TO THE OPEN COURT.
IT WILL FINISH THE POINT QUICKLY IF IT WORKS, BUT IF IT DOESN'T, WILL MAKE HIM GO OFF BALANCE.
③ GO FOR AN ACE WITH AN ANGLE CROSS.
HIGH RISK, BUT IF I MAKE THIS ONE TOO, IT'LL ADD A LOT OF PRESSURE ON HIM.

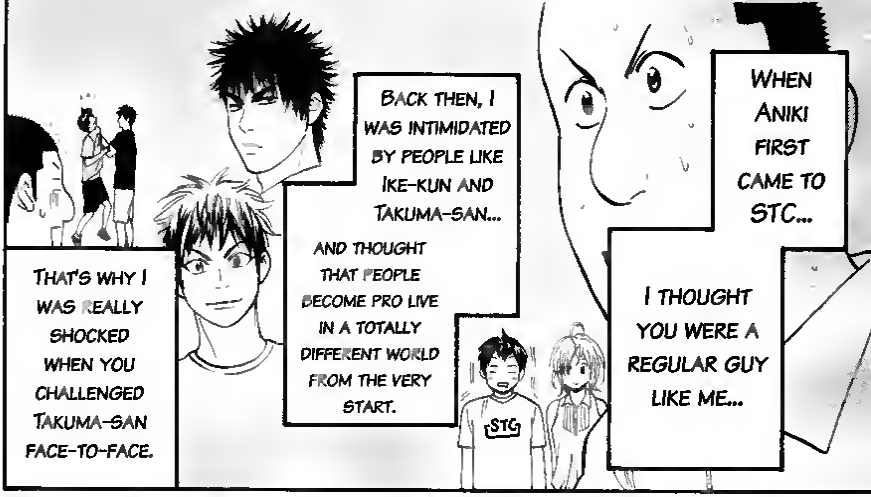

HA!

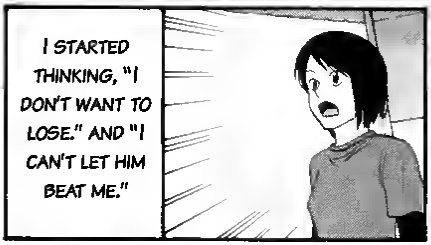
②!!

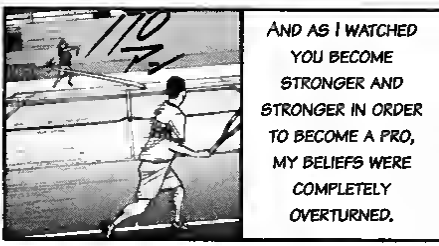
HE RE-TURNED IT, THEN MY NEXT MOVE IS...

④ TAKE HIM OFF GUARD AS HE IS TRYING TO RETURN TO THE CENTER.
③ FINISH WITH A DROP SHOT.
② FINISH WITH A FAST CROSS FLAT.
① FINISH WITH A SLOW ANGLE CROSS.
TURN AROUND AND...
④ !!

...RGH.
YES!
0 - 30.
HA!!
THIS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES...
ANIKI..


When Aniki first came to STC...
I thought you were a regular guy like me...
Back then, I was intimidated by people like Ike-kun and Takuma-san...
and thought that people become pro live in a totally different world from the very start.
That's why I was really shocked when you challenged Takuma-san face-to-face.


I started thinking, "I don't want to lose." and "I can't let him beat me."


And as I watched you become stronger and stronger in order to become a pro, my beliefs were completely overturned.

Seeing Aniki work hard made me work hard.
So it's all thanks to Aniki that I'm able to stand here on this court.

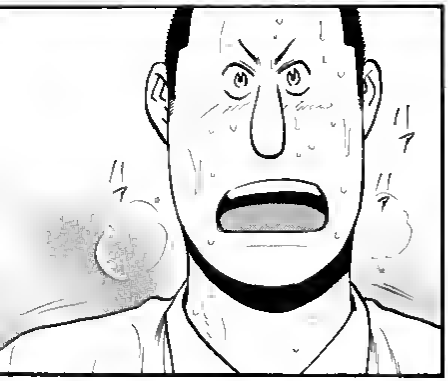
THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!
PLAYER
I
II
III
MARUO EIICHIROU
5
FUKAZAWA YUKICHI
3
DUNLOP

おおお
FIRST SET WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 6 - 3.
WOW— THERE ARE EVEN LESS OPENINGS COMPARED TO PRACTICE!
SINCE I WON THE SET, I'LL AMP UP THE RISK.
YES! ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME UPS AND DOWNS, I'M PLAYING THE WAY I USUALLY DO...
HE'S BEEN WORKING SO HARD EVERY SINGLE DAY.
WELL... OF COURSE.

He's using his body and his mind to its fullest at all times.
Not only did he build himself from the ground up with that hellish Body Transformation,
I've always been watching Aniki work unbelievably hard...
from the closest possible place.

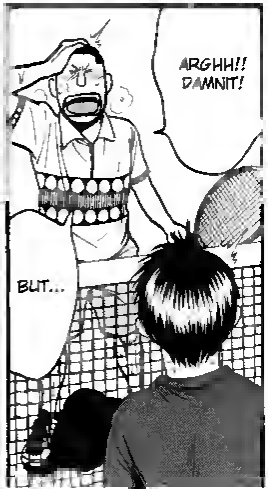
THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT TO LOSE...!
AND IT WAS ALL FOR THIS DAY.
BUT TO BE HONEST... I REALLY WANT ANIKI TO BECOME THE CHAMPION!
I'M PROBABLY NOT SUITED TO BE A PRO...
SEEING HOW I END UP THINKING THAT WAY...

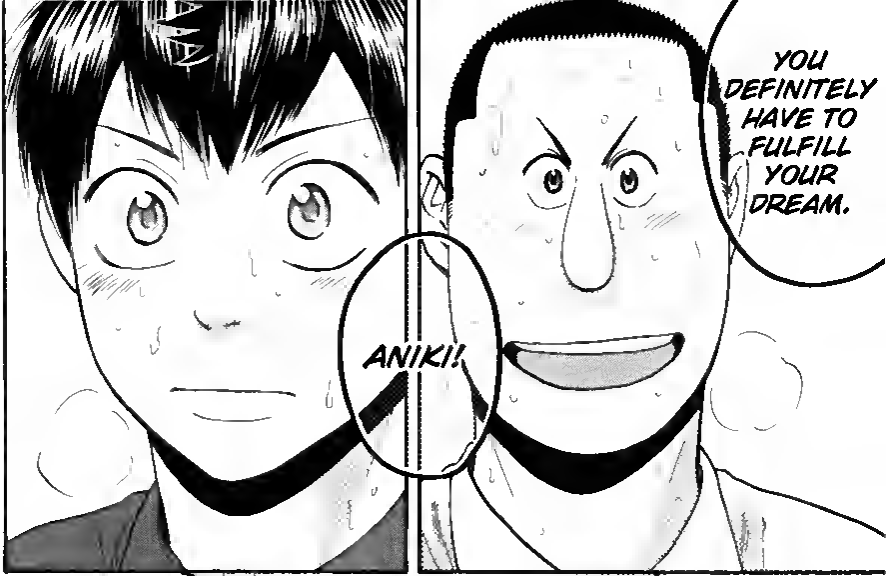
COUNT: 6 - 3, 6 - 0.
GAME, SET, AND MATCH. WON BY MARUO.



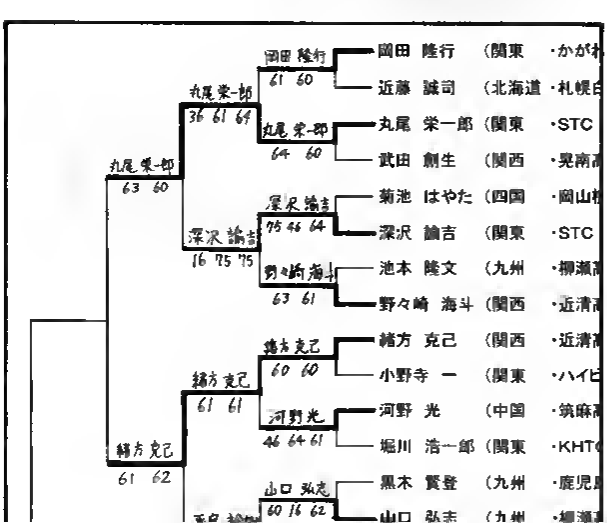
...

I'M REALLY THANKFUL THAT I WAS ABLE TO COME ALL THE WAY HERE WITH ANIKI!
I FULFILLED MY DREAM TO FIGHT AGAINST ANIKI...
THANK YOU!


ARGHH!! DAMNIT!
BUT...


ANIKI!
YOU DEFINITELY HAVE TO FULFILL YOUR DREAM.

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.
THANK YOU, YUKICHI-KUN...


岡田 隆行 61 60
丸尾 栄一郎 36 61 64
丸尾 栄一郎 64 60
丸尾 栄一郎 63 60
深沢 諭吉 75 46 64
深沢 諭吉 16 75 75
野々崎 海斗 63 61
緒方 克己 60 60
緒方 克己 61 61
河野 光 46 64 61
緒方 克己 61 62
山口 弘志 60 16 62
岡田 隆行 (関東 ・かが
近藤 誠司 (北海道 ・札幌白
丸尾 栄一郎 (関東 ・STC
武田 創生 (関西 ・晃南
菊池 はやた (四国 ・岡山
深沢 諭吉 (関東 ・STC
池本 隆文 (九州 ・柳瀬
野々崎 海斗 (関西 ・近清
緒方 克己 (関西 ・近清
小野寺 一 (関東 ・ハイビ
河野 光 (中国 ・筑麻
堀川 浩一郎 (関東 ・KHT
黒木 賢登 (九州 ・鹿児
山口 弘志 (九州 ・柳瀬

THAT BOY... HE REALLY WON.

Baby Steps

Baby Steps 22 Extra

Date

Hello, this is Katsuki.

Volume 22 has been mostly about the Okada match. I didn't know that the match would go on for this long... About "Having 'it'" or "Not having 'it'", it's unfortunate that it ended with Okada's personal philosophy.

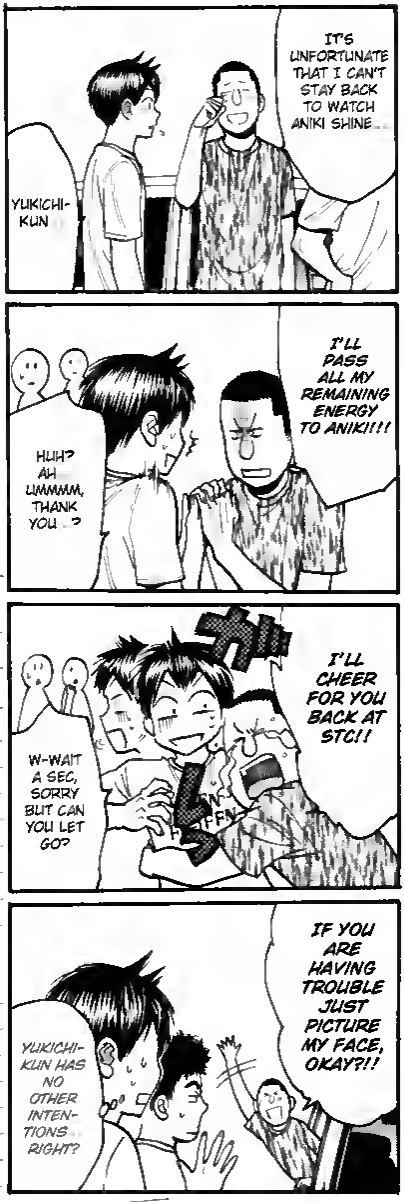
The phrase "A person who has what it takes" gets used in all kinds of sports, but it might be rare for someone to try so hard to become one like Okada has. I wish Okada and Maruo both become players where others will say "That guy has what it takes".

Actually, it would be a problem for Ei-chan, the protagonist, to not have 'it'.

We will kick off the Ogata match in the next volume. Okada and Ogata sounds pretty similar, but who cares~...

Then see you next time!

⇒TOO INTENSE FAREWELL⇐


YUKICHI-KUN...
IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT I CAN'T STAY BACK TO WATCH ANIKI SHINE...
HUH? AH UMMMM, THANK YOU...?
I'LL PASS ALL MY REMAINING ENERGY TO ANIKI!!!
W-WAIT A SEC, SORRY BUT CAN YOU LET GO?
I'LL CHEER FOR YOU BACK AT STC!!
YUKICHI-KUN HAS NO OTHER INTEN-TIONS... RIGHT?
IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE JUST PICTURE MY FACE, OKAY?!!